· THE · UNGUARDED GATE

FLOYD W. LAMBERTSON

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THE RULES OF THE GAME

THE RULES OF THE GAME—TEACHER'S MANUAL

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The Unguarded Gate

A SERIES OF SERMONS FOR CHILDREN, LEADING TO DECISION DAY AND COVERING THE SCHOOL YEAR

BY
FLOYD W. LAMBERTSON

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PREFACE

One of the first duties of every pastor is to gain the allegiance of his young people to Jesus Christ. Particularly should this be stressed during the eleventh and twelfth years. Statistics show that with the exception of the sixteenth year more children make a dedication of their lives to Christ at this period than at any other time. Since this is true, the pastor should do his utmost to have them make a definite commitment of their lives to Christ while they are most impressionable.

More than that, there are always a considerable number of children in every congregation. Since they are there, it is only fair that some attention be paid to them. A children's sermon at the beginning of the church hour will make them feel that they are not forgotten.

Purpose of the Book

This book aims to present a series of children's sermons beginning with the school year in the fall, and closing with the end of the school year in June. It is aimed directly at the eleventh and twelfth years. Each lesson is

looking toward Decision Day at Easter time. There is a particular purpose for the individual lesson. There is also a monthly goal. Then there is the continued stress on making a decision until Easter time, after which the lessons deal with problems of the young Christian.

Psychological Characteristics of the Age Group

The most successful salesman adapts his method to the needs and interests of his prospective customer. The most successful pastor will do the same. The more he knows of the spontaneous interests and the motives governing the life of the children, the better will he be able to gain and hold their attention. In order that we may have the mental characteristics of this age group clearly in mind, let us review the most outstanding ones.

The eleven-year period is one of *habit formation*. At this time habits are becoming more or less fixed for life. The permanent trend of the individual is being fashioned. If right habits are encouraged, they will become the background of character for adult life. If wrong habits are made, the child will be handicapped through all his days. One of the gravest misfortunes is that a child should start

life with a bundle of wrong habits. The first stress in these sermons is on habit formation.

Hero worship is a further characteristic of this age. The child now is beginning to take the heroic qualities of many lives and fuse them into an ideal hero. Such a hero determines his moral code. The sermons aim to present the heroic qualities of the great men of the past and inspire the child to follow them.

The *desire to serve* is another outstanding motive force. The child is growing less self-centered and wishes to help others. Altruism is having its birth. Self-sacrifice for others or for a cause is more pronounced. The Scout's "good turn daily" is an attempt on the part of the founders of Scout Craft to capitalize on this growing tendency. The pastor can use the same tendency, making the child feel that his service is service for Christ.

Loyalty is another strong motive force. This is one of the fundamental virtues of the age group. As the child becomes a member of a social group or organization, he begins to show this feeling of loyalty to the group. The value of such loyalty cannot be overestimated. For our effort and activity in life inevitably follow the line of our loyalties. Loyalty to Christ, to one's ideals, and to the church can be de-

veloped during these early days so that it will motivate all the rest of life.

Finally, the child longs for *group approval.* Just as do adults, he wishes to feel that his companions think well of him. He fears ridicule. Thus group approval can be made to serve the cause of good as well as of evil.

These five mental characteristics—habit formation, hero worship, helpfulness, loyalty and group approval—are the ones which have been particularly stressed in the following sermons.

Moral Problems of the Age Group

Not only should the pastor and teacher know the native interests and motive forces, but he should consider the moral problems which the child of this age has to meet. Chief among these are lying, cheating, stealing, problems of temper, fear of social disapproval, swearing, and the like. In order to serve the child most we must adapt our sermon material to reenforce him in the ways of right living.

Preparing the Individual Sermon

These sermons are at best only suggestive. They aim to present an approach. The individual pastor or teacher must work them over into the mold of his own thinking. Some of them may be read to advantage. Others

should be told in the form of stories. No matter what may be the form of presentation, the sermon should be thoroughly assimilated. If to be told, it should be outlined. Then the speaker can follow the outline and speak extemporaneously.

Using the Illustrated Sermons

Several sermons suggest illustrative materials. There are two reasons for using them. In the first place they gain and hold attention. In the second place they help to reenforce the purpose of the sermon. The author has usually placed the materials on a table near the pulpit and in plain sight of the audience. Curiosity has become a sufficient motive force to gain attention. He has also found it desirable to have everything ready in advance and go through the sermon to see that it goes smoothly. Any slip in the procedure may spoil what would otherwise be a good sermon. As soon as the materials have told their story, they are pushed into the background. They should not remain the focus of attention.

Making an Appeal

At the close of some sermons an appeal is suggested. With the stories an appeal should not be necessary. The story should make its

own appeal. If a formal appeal is to be used, it should be brief and right to the point. Children dislike being "preached at." Let the closing words leave exactly the lesson which you want to remain.

The author has used these children's sermons during the past five years. Some of them have been used many times. In all cases they have been found interesting to both young and old. Likewise they have served their purpose of bringing the children to a decision of their life to Christ. This is the primary purpose of the series. He hopes they may prove helpful to other pastors also.

F. W. L.

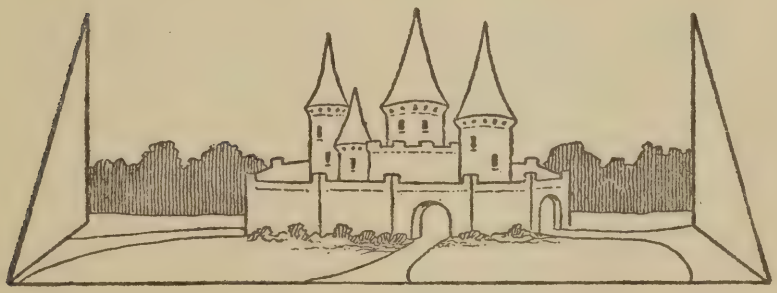
Mitchell, South Dakota, October 7, 1925.

SEPTEMBER
OUR HABITS FORMING CHARACTER

THE UNGUARDED GATE

PURPOSE: To show the importance of impressions upon the mind.

OBJECT MATERIALS: A box with sod, background, twigs for trees, castle wall of cardboard with gate in the center, cardboard box for buildings and inner keep.



SCRIPTURE: Keep on watch then, for you never know what day your Lord will come. But be sure of this, that if the householder had known at what watch in the night the thief was coming, he would have been on the watch, he would not have allowed his house to be broken into. So be ready yourselves.—*Matt. 24. 42–44.*

LESSON STORY

(*Note:* The box with the sod and background and trees are already placed. The wall and buildings are to be put in as the story progresses.)

LONG years ago there lived in a far country a great and wonderful prince. He had no castle

in which to dwell, so he told his workmen to go and build a mighty palace that would keep out any enemy. So they went out and began building the walls (here place in walls); then they built the living quarters and the dungeon or inner keep (here put in the inner keep). Outside the wall they made a deep ditch or moat. Five gateways led from the castle to all parts of the realm, and along these came messengers who would tell the prince how his kingdom was progressing. The gates of the castle were made of massive oak, and the chains which held them could be quickly drawn so as to shut out an enemy.

The prince had not lived long in his new home when an invading army laid siege to his castle. He felt no fear, for the walls were strong and the gates well guarded. But one night he neglected to station a guard at one gate. The enemy found the unguarded gate. They let down the drawbridge and swarmed into the courtyard. In a short time the prince found himself a captive in his own palace. He had been overpowered because of the unguarded gate.

We Represent the Prince and Castle

Children, I want you to think of these bodies of ours as a castle. You remember

that the Bible speaks of the body as a temple in which dwells the soul. The real you and the real me is not the body. You have heard of people who have lost an arm or a limb and still the real self goes on without them. The body serves as a shelter or a protection for the mind or soul. We might rightly think, then, of the soul as the prince who dwells within his castle, the body.

There Are Five Gateways to the Soul

There are also five gateways into this castle, our bodies: through sight, sound, taste, smell, and touch we learn of the great world about us. Messengers come through these gateways to inform the soul of the things happening outside. But not all the messengers who would enter are our friends; some are our worst enemies. I wish we might realize the danger of these enemies who would come through the unguarded gate and make captive the prince who dwells within.

Application

Suppose we think first of the gateway of the ear. Many helpful messengers come through this gateway during the day. We hear the song of the birds, the glad shouts of our companions, the kindly voice of mother.

But suppose we stop to listen to an evil story. Beware. We are leaving an unguarded gate. We may say that it is a harmless joke and we will soon forget it. But the enemy has gone through the unguarded gate and will surely do us harm. We are less noble than before. We remember the story; we think it over, and some day we find ourselves doing that which was first only a thought. The prince has been taken captive.

Or let us think of the gateway of the eye. We see the beautiful sights of nature—the sunset glow, the glory of the mountains, the fruitful harvest of the plains. These are helpful messengers who enrich life. But suppose we look at a foul picture or read an evil book. We say no harm has been done and soon we will forget. But these impressions have been stored up in memory and we do not forget. In fact, we never forget. The unguarded gate has been entered by our enemy and he is there to stay. We have become less noble and kingly than before.

Appeal

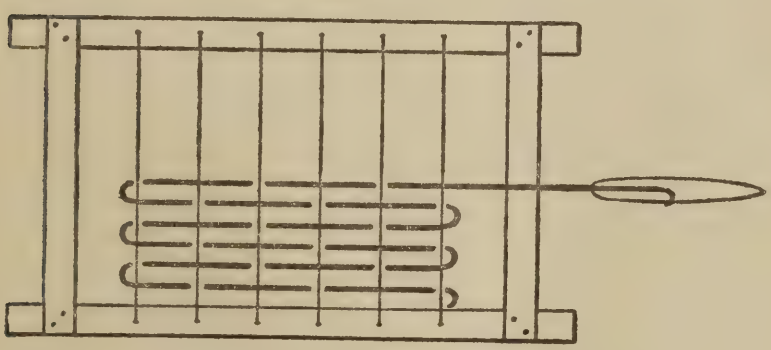
Boys and girls, I want you to guard the gateways of the soul. Station a guard there to keep out every impure and ignoble thing. Paul said, "Whatsoever things are true, what-

soever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, . . . think on these things." He was insisting that only the worth-while things should enter life. Let us watch lest the enemy enter and take captive the prince who dwells within.

THE WEAVERS

PURPOSE: To show that character is the result of daily deeds.

OBJECT MATERIALS: A wooden frame with tacks and string; a shuttle and three feet of yarn; paper, cloth, wire, and shavings. A Navajo rug or the picture of one.



SCRIPTURE: Whoever he is, let him be careful how he builds. The foundation is laid, namely Jesus Christ, and no one can lay any other. On that foundation anyone may build gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, or straw, but in every case the nature of his work will come out; . . .

THE UNGUARDED GATE

If the structure raised by any man survives,
he will be rewarded;
If a man's work is burnt up,
he will be a loser.—*1 Cor. 3. 10–13; 14, 15.*
A man will reap just what he sows.—*Gal. 6, 7.*

Lesson Story

(*Note:* Have materials all ready on the table *beside* you.)

Down in the southern part of our country, in the States of Arizona and New Mexico, live the tribe of Indians called Navajos. They are a prosperous people and spend their time in herding sheep and growing crops. The wool which is grown is later woven into beautiful blankets and rugs. Here is a rug (picture of a rug) woven by one of the women of the tribe. See how carefully the work is done. These are valuable because of the painstaking labor which has gone into the making of them.

Let us take a trip to their reservation and watch the weaver at her work. Before her is the loom with its many strings running from top to bottom. She sits before the loom and patiently pushes the shuttle back and forth. Then with a paddle she pats the thread down so that it will be closely woven. After many days it will be completed and she will sell it to us.

To-day I have here a small loom and will try to weave a rug. The warp is already

strung and here is the shuttle and thread. I weave it back and forth (doing it while talking) and then pat it down. This looks as if it were going to make a fine rug. Only it goes so slowly. I think I will make it go faster. We cannot take the time needed by weaving this thread. Let's put in this piece of cloth; that will help to fill up. Now I go on with the thread. Here is a piece of paper that will take a lot of room. Let's put that in. Now I weave the thread again. Here is a piece of wire. It's a little long, but I can bend the ends back. That can go in next. And here are some shavings; they will fit in here. Now we will weave a couple more rounds of thread and call it done.

Here it is, children—a fine Navajo rug. How much will you give me for it? Not anything? Why, how is that? This is a good rug. It is made just like the Indians make theirs. You say I have put poor material into it? Does that make any difference? Ah yes, it does make a difference. That is the lesson I wanted to teach. The final value is determined by the kind of material we put into a thing.

Application

Children, we are all weavers, weavers of life.

You and I are daily building character. Every thought we think, every act we do is becoming a part of our life. We are the sum total of the thoughts and deeds of the past. Very largely our to-morrows will be controlled by the days that have gone by. For our deeds tend to form habits, and habits determine character.

Weaving in Bad Material

Here is a boy who wants to have a happy, helpful life. But notice the material he puts into each day's work. He is selfish. He wants everyone to help him, while he seldom helps others. On the hike he waits until the rest have done the hard work. And he has an ugly temper. If parents and playmates do not do what he wants done, he becomes furious. Also he tries to get even with those who he thinks have harmed him. He likes good grades, but is too lazy to do the work, so he copies from someone else. Or perhaps it is a girl who has some of these traits. See the bad material they are weaving into life: selfishness and temper, revenge and cheating. What sort of characters will they have when they are through? We found that the final result was determined by the material which went into the loom. (Hold up loom.)

Weaving in Good Material

Here is another child who does his good turn many times a day. His teacher can depend on him to have his work done well. He can be trusted in all places. He is courteous and kind. He laughs at hard work and tackles it with a will. He is trying to weave into life only the things which will make for real manhood. I think you can see which life will be more valuable at the end.

Appeal

Our Scripture lesson said that we reap what we sow. What we weave into life forms our habits and character. It also said that life would be tested. If we weave in selfishness and revenge and deceit, it will not be able to stand the test. But if we build helpful deeds and kindly thoughts and conscientious work, we will be able to stand the test. Let us then weave into life only the worth-while things.

THE CHAINS OF HABIT

PURPOSE: To show how habits may grow from good thoughts and kindly deeds.

OBJECT MATERIALS: A spool of coarse thread.

SCRIPTURE: Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life.—*Prov. 4. 23.*

Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God. —*Matt. 5. 8.*

You have heard how the men of old were told, "Murder not." But I tell you, whoever is angry with his brother [without cause] will be sentenced by God.—*Matt. 5. 21, 23.*

Lesson Story

I WANT one of the boys to help me with this lesson. Will you come up here and put your hands together? Now, I am going to tie this thread around your hands and see if you can break it. Yes, it broke easily. Now I will wind it three times around your hands and let you break it. Again you broke it, but not so easily. Now I am going to wind it many times around your hand (work quickly and get enough strands that he can't break it) and then see how much harder it is to break. Possibly it cannot be broken at all.

Actions Repeated Become Habits

Our lesson to-day has to do with habit. Habits might be spoken of as actions we have done so often that we do not have to think how we do them; they do themselves. The first time we do the act we must watch carefully how it is done. After a few times it is much easier for us. Finally the habit is established, and it is hard not to do it that way. The girls here may have learned how to knit. They consciously watched each movement

when they were learning. Now they can knit and talk at the same time without giving a thought to the process of knitting. Our first principle is that actions repeated become habits.

Thoughts Precede Conscious Acts

But behind the act is the thought. We think of something, and then the thought becomes an act. I think that I would like some water, and my hands and feet go ahead and do what was at first a thought. We feel hungry, and soon we find ourselves eating an apple or a piece of cake. The thought was transformed into action.

We Must Avoid Bad Thoughts

Since thoughts tend to become acts, we must avoid bad thoughts. I want to tell you the story of a man who let an evil thought ruin his life. You all recall the story of King Saul and the boy David and the giant Goliath. After David had killed the giant, the army returned toward the city of Jerusalem and the people began to praise David for his brave act. *Saul had a thought of jealousy.* It was nothing but a thought and the king quickly put it away. But that thought returned. He thought it again and again. Soon the *thought*

of jealousy became one of hatred, and one day *what was before only a thought became an act.* The king picked up his javelin and hurled it at David as the young man sat at the table. David fled for his life. Then the thought and the act took entire possession of Saul's life. Jealousy had turned to murder. He organized his soldiers and went out into the mountains to find the young man who had done him no harm. If we follow the story of Saul's life, we find that it became a complete failure because he allowed evil thoughts to dwell in his mind.

This is what Jesus meant in the Scripture lesson. He said that the people of old thought one had to commit murder before they had done wrong. Jesus taught that anyone who had a thought of anger toward another might find that thought passing over into action. He said in reality that we must beware what we think, for if the thought at last becomes habit, we are bound in chains that are hard to break.

We Must Cultivate Good Thoughts and Kindly Deeds

But this law can become our friend as well as our enemy. Suppose we purpose to think only good thoughts and to do only worthy deeds. These likewise form habits, and we

have safeguarded ourselves by the chains of worthy habits. If we read more about the life of David we will find that he had two chances to kill King Saul while he lay asleep. He refused, however, to allow this thought of murder to find a place in his mind. He insisted on living such a life as he could be proud of.

Conclusion

I wish that we might get some principles firmly fixed in mind as we leave this lesson. The first is that we must refrain from any act or any thought that we would not want to become a permanent habit of life. Further, let us decide to cultivate kindly thinking and helpful deeds. And, finally, let us realize that the chains of habit can bind us to the good until it will be difficult to do the wrong. We should realize that thoughts tend to become actions. Acts repeated form habits. Habits long continued determine character. The chains of habit, either good or bad, will ultimately master life. Jesus therefore gives the wise injunction when he says, "Blessed are the pure in heart"; their lives shall be pure.

THE LESSON FROM THE CHALK

PURPOSE: To show the value of having good companions.
OBJECT MATERIALS: One glass of pure water, a second of

diluted ink, a third of strong vinegar, and a piece of carbon chalk.

SCRIPTURE: Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful.—*Psa. 1. 1.*

He that walketh with wise men shall be wise: but a companion of fools shall be destroyed.—*Prov. 13. 20.*

LESSON STORY

I HAVE here to-day a piece of spotless chalk and three glasses of liquid. I am going to dip this chalk into each glass and see what happens. I dip it into the first glass, and it comes out as pure as when it went in. That is because the surroundings were pure.

Now I put it into the second glass. I take it out again and find that it is soiled and stained. Why? Because the surroundings were impure. They have left their mark upon the chalk. It can never be spotless and white again. No amount of washing will ever make it as it was before. The stain is there to stay.

Now I put it into the third glass. I want you to watch carefully what is happening. Do you see the bubbles arising? That means that in this environment, in these surroundings, the chalk is actually being destroyed. If we left it there, the very heart of the chalk would be eaten out. The surroundings are having their effect.

OUR HABITS FORMING CHARACTER

Our Surroundings Influence Our Lives

You and I are like the chalk. When we were born, our lives were pure and clean from the hands of our Creator. We wish to keep them that way. Like the good Scout, we take our oath to keep ourselves "physically strong, mentally awake, and morally straight." By so doing we would remain pure like the white chalk. But as we grow up we find some people who are not so much concerned in remaining pure like the true Scout. The lesson I wish to bring to-day is this: if we associate with that kind of people, our lives will be influenced by them. Our companions and associations will have their effect.

How Our Companions May Influence Us

The first law of the Scout is trustworthiness. He is honest and honorable in all his dealings. Now, suppose he gets out with a group of boys some evening. One of them says: "Fellows, I know where there is a watermelon patch. Come on; let's get some." The Scout knows that that is stealing. It is taking what does not belong to him. And a good Scout will not steal. But it is very hard to say "no" when the rest of the group are planning to do wrong. Here we see the danger that comes from getting in with poor companions. Our lives are liable

to become stained and spotted by the influence and example of those about us.

On the other hand, let us imagine that a group of Scouts go for a hike to the woods. They spend the day fishing and hunting and tracking. They have a good swim and practice breaking the death grip. They roast the weenies over the fire and make their own biscuits. They play games around the campfire at night. They tell stories. They come home tired but happy. They have spent a day in good companionship, and none of them have been harmed. Like the chalk in pure water, they received no harm from their associations.

How Our Best Pal Can Influence Us

Every one of us has a best pal, and that person has a tremendous influence on our lives. Imagine that Bill Jones has said some mean, cutting things about you that are untrue. You are angry and would like to give him the trouncing which you think he deserves. You go to your best pal and tell him. He says: "That's right. I wouldn't let that fellow say such a thing about me. Go ahead and beat him up." The advice of a pal at such a time comes with a great deal of force and we are apt to follow it, forgetting that two wrongs never made a right.

But now, on the other hand, let us suppose he said: "Ned, you can't afford to be little because he is. I don't believe Abraham Lincoln would do it. Let's be too big to let him bother us." In this case we will be influenced in the right way. The advice of a pal counts.

The Latin Proverb

There is an old Latin proverb which shows the influence of companions. A father gave his son a basket of apples. The son was very proud of the gift and set them away. There was one bad apple among them. When he returned a few days later, he found that many of the apples had spoiled. He showed his father what had happened and the man replied, "Son, bad apples spoil good ones, and bad companions spoil good boys."

Appeal

Let us associate with those people who help us to be "physically strong, mentally awake, and morally straight."

THE MESSAGE OF THE CAMERA

PURPOSE: To show the wisdom of storing your memory with inspiring pictures.

OBJECT MATERIALS: A camera, a beautiful mountain picture and a picture of some unlovely spot.

SCRIPTURE: Finally, brothers, keep in mind whatever is true, whatever is worthy, whatever is just, whatever

is pure, whatever is attractive, whatever is high-toned, all excellence, all merit.—*Phil. 4. 8.*

Lesson Story

I HAVE here to-day a camera. It is a simple but wonderful little box with a shutter, a lens, and a sensitive film in the back. When I open the shutter, the rays of light pass through the lens and focus on the film. When that is developed we have a picture.

Let us go on a trip and take the camera along. We are going to the mountains and will want some mountain pictures. Here is one, snow-capped, cloud-encircled, clad with a mantle of green firs. It stands so quiet and still. Let us take a picture of it. Here behind me is an ugly rock pile tangled with weeds. I claim I want the picture of the mountains, but I turn the camera toward the weeds and pull the shutter. What will I have as a picture—the mountain? No, I will have the rock pile and a tangle of weeds. That is what I focused upon.

There is a life lesson for us in this incident. We may state it that the memory picture which we have in the mind will be determined by what we look at. Our eyes are constantly bringing in pictures. These mental pictures are then hung on memory's wall and remain forever. The scientist tells us that if a picture

persists for a couple of seconds, it will last for life. Since our memory pictures are so lasting, we should be careful what kind of pictures we store up.

Stocking the Mind With Harmful Pictures

Here is a boy or girl who begins stocking his or her picture gallery with pictures he or she will regret. If a boy, he *cheats* in the baseball game—memory tucks that picture away. He delights in torturing dumb animals—that is added to the list. He tucks Bob's new glove under his waist. When accused of taking it he puts the blame on an innocent boy. The vicious memories of *theft* and *lying* have been stored away. Around home he is constantly *complaining*. He makes life miserable for all the rest. He throws his clothes around and makes mother much extra work. He is utterly *selfish*. And even a girl may do some of these things. Think of the pictures they are storing away in the mind. Cheating and cruelty and theft and lying and selfishness—what a picture gallery they will have! And, worst of all, they must live with it the rest of their life, for no picture is ever lost.

Stocking the Mind With Pictures That Inspire

There was once a lad in the backwoods of

Indiana who purposed in his heart to store up only those memories which would inspire. He overcharged a woman three cents one day and walked several miles to repay her. He would not have a memory that had the appearance of cheating. At another time he saw a pig mired in the ditch. Although he had on his best clothes he helped free the pig. He did not want a memory of dumb animals in distress. He was too big to be selfish. He could overlook the faults of others. When, during the Civil War, some lad had fallen asleep on sentry duty, he pardoned him rather than allow the rules of war to be executed; and this he did more than once. Lincoln knew that one cannot have beautiful memory pictures if he fills his mind with bad thoughts and unkindly deeds. (Hold up ugly picture.)

What Picture Returns Most Often to the Mind?

I want to take up now the most serious consideration. What memory picture comes most frequently to your mind in your leisure moments? What do you enjoy thinking about? If left to yourself, what memory comes crowding into your mind? The true nature of any boy or girl is known when we know what his or her mind naturally turns to in the moments of idleness. Is it a vicious picture of an evil

deed? If so, that is an indication of the kind of person the thinker is. Is it a picture that inspires? If so, that is the true index of his or her life. Remember, *we cannot always say what picture shall enter the mind, but we can determine whether it shall remain or not.*

Let us follow this bit of reasoning. If I look in front of me, I can't look behind me at the same time. (Enact this so that they grasp the idea.) If I think this noble thing, I can't think a base thing at the same time. If I insist on focusing the attention on the good, I crowd out the bad. Paul knew this truth. He said, in substance, in the Scripture lesson: "Insist on thinking about the true and just and honest and pure. If you compel the mind to dwell on these things, there will be no room for anything else. Meditate on inspiring memories."

Appeal

Let us stock the walls of memory with beautiful pictures of kindly deeds. Let us hold them before the mind in our leisure moments. By so doing we are losing the capacity to think thoughts of evil.

OCTOBER
CHARACTER MEETING THE TEST

THE TIME OF TESTING

PURPOSE: To show that habits built now will be tested in later life

OBJECT MATERIALS: The box with sand, twigs for trees, sod for grass, background of cardboard, a piece of flat rock, pebbles for the river, and two children's blocks to represent the houses.

SCRIPTURE: Now, everyone who listens to these words of mine and acts upon them will be like a sensible man who built his house on rock. The rain came down, the floods rose, the winds blew and beat upon that house, but it did not fall, for it was founded on rock. And everyone who listens to these words of mine and does not act upon them will be like a stupid man who built his house on sand. The rain came down, the floods rose, the winds blew and beat upon that house, and down it fell—with a mighty crash.—*Matt. 7. 24–27.*

LESSON STORY

OUR lesson to-day shows us that the charac-

ters we are building will have their time of testing. Jesus gives us in a few verses a story which I want to enlarge.

Two shepherds in southern Palestine decided to migrate northward. They gathered together their belongings and herds and started out. After traveling slowly for many days along the banks of the Jordan River they came one day to a beautiful valley. The grass was long and plentiful. A little river wandered through the plains bringing moisture for the growing things. The men looked at it for a time and decided that this should be their new home.

The Foolish Shepherd Builds His House

One of the shepherds was not a very wise man. He looked about and found a spot near the river. "Aha," he said, "here is a fine place for my house. The water is handy, the trees are close by, my flocks can rest here in the shade. I will build my house here upon the sand and it will soon be done." So he gathered his material and went to work and shortly his house was completed. (Set in block to represent his house.)

The Wise Shepherd Builds His House

The other shepherd was more careful in the

choice of a location. He saw that the river overflowed its banks during the rainy season. He knew that it would destroy all his work if it came rushing from the snow-capped peaks in the distance. Seeing a ledge of rock far back and high above the level of the valley, he quietly said, "There is the spot for my house."

The other shepherd looked at him in surprise. "You are not going 'way back there to build, are you? Think of the hard work you will have in getting your material up there. Then you will have to carry all of your water from the river. Why don't you build right here beside me on the sands? It is much easier." But the wise shepherd said, "I will build my house upon a rock."

The Testing Time Comes

Days came and went. Slowly the wise builder gathered his material and sank his foundations into the rock. Slowly he builded. Carefully he laid the walls that would withstand both wind and weather. After many days his house was completed. (Set in other block.) And both shepherds were happy in their new homes.

But finally the rainy season set in. The rains fell day after day. The river rose above

its usual level. The foolish builder looked worried. Then one night the storm broke in all its fury. The wind howled and shrieked down the valley, the cloud banks scudded dark along the horizon, the water from the distant mountains came with maddening roar down over the valley. The foolish shepherd heard it and fled for the home of his neighbor. In the darkness he heard it strike his house and crash it to pieces (snatch away the lower block), but the home of his neighbor was safe from the storm. It was founded upon a rock.

Application

This story is talking about your life and mine. Jesus said that life should be tested, and that unless we built carefully our work would not stand the test.

Here is a boy who is having an examination in school. He has been too lazy to master the problems each day, but now he wants to pass the test. He sees his neighbor's paper on the desk in front of him, and slyly copies what he finds on it. He is doing the unwise thing—he is building on the sand. That is exactly what Jesus said about the foolish builder. He was a cheat. He had built on a wrong foundation, and so has this boy, and in the time of testing he cannot stand.

CHARACTER MEETING THE TEST

Appeal

"A Scout is trustworthy." Let us build absolute honesty into our lives. In all places and under all conditions let us live up to this first rule of noble living. Then we will be like the man who built his house upon the rock.

PLAYING THE GAME SQUARE

PURPOSE: To show the value of living up to your ideals.

SCRIPTURE: Do you not know that in a race, though all run, only one man gains the prize? Run so as to win the prize. Every athlete practices self-restraint all round; but while they do it to win a fading wreath, we do it for an unfading.—*1 Cor. 9. 24–26.*

I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith.—*2 Tim. 4. 7.*

LESSON STORY

OUT on the plains of Kansas, in the little county seat of Colby, a baseball game was about to begin. Two high schools were soon to battle for the championship of their schools and their respective counties. For weeks they had been preparing for this crucial day. Each had beaten the other schools of the county. For weeks parents and friends had talked of the coming contest. Now the time for the combat had arrived.

The day dawned bright and clear. The wind blew from the southwest and the plains

shimmered in the heat. Long before the time when the game was to be called, the "fans" began to arrive. Delegations from the Goodland High School and Sherman County came with their school yells and their banners. The home team of Colby also had its enthusiastic rooters and supporters. There was noise and action in abundance.

At exactly two-thirty o'clock the umpire called the game. Each team played its best. The pitchers of the opposing teams did such fine work that one inning after another passed without a score. In the sixth inning the home team lost control of the game and allowed three runs to be made. The Goodland and Sherman County crowd went wild with delight. They felt sure that their team would be able to win the game. Playing with grim determination, the Colby team made one run in the seventh inning. At the opening of the ninth inning the score was still three to one in favor of Goodland. This was probably Colby's last chance. The visiting team was retired without a score. Colby came to bat. Was it possible for them to win against such odds? The first man up, Jones, made a hit and got safely to first base. The next batter fanned. The third was caught on a fly—and it was in the ninth inning! So with two men out and a

man on first, Slim Medill came to bat. He was the idol of the home team and deserved the honor. Several times before when the team were behind he had hit a home run and saved the day.

The first ball did not suit Slim and he let it go by.

"Strike one!" shouted the umpire.

Slim said nothing. Again the pitcher hurled the ball.

"Strike two!" cried the umpire.

The Goodland rooters shouted in derision. Then came a ball right over the plate and Slim smashed it with all his might. The ball soared toward the far center field and Slim started on what was plainly a home run. Jones made the circuit and came racing home with Medill one base behind him and going fast. In the meantime the center fielder had got the ball and had sent it straight and true to his second baseman. Slim was homeward bound from third base. It now became a race between man and ball. Which would get there first? Slim saw the catcher getting ready to receive the relayed ball. He heard the coach yell to him to slide. He did so and landed at the catcher's feet in a cloud of dust. The umpire called him "safe."

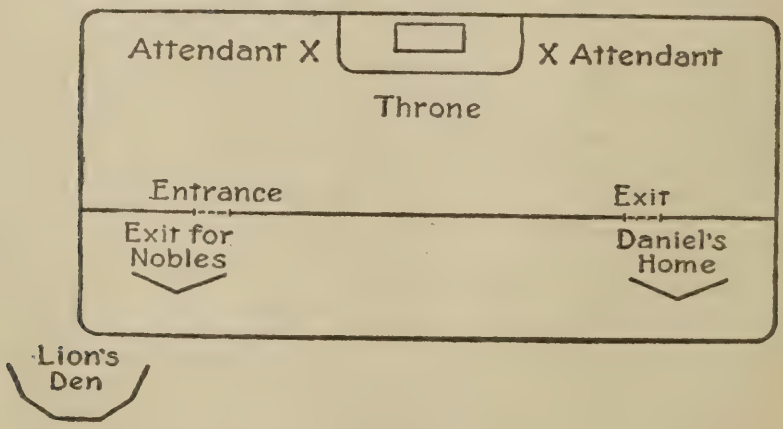
It was now the Colby rooters' turn to make

a noise, and they did. They threw their hats into the air; they slapped one another on the back and shouted until they were hoarse. Then something happened. Slim was seen to walk out to the umpire and exchange a few words with him. The latter raised his hand, and as the uproar died down he said: "Medill tells me that he did not touch home plate. The decision is reversed. He is out."

There was rejoicing by the Goodland people as the crowd dispersed, but everyone present that day knew that Slim Medill had won a greater victory than the one indicated by the score.

HOW DANIEL MET THE TEST— A PANTOMIME

Purpose: To show how a brave man met the test of his character.



CHARACTER MEETING THE TEST

Arrangement of the platform

CHARACTERS

The King of Babylon.	Two jealous nobles.
Daniel, his counselor.	Two attendants.

Properties. The staging of this pantomime should be very simple. A platform with two levels is better if available. In the center back should be a platform and throne. For equipment of attendants one might look at pictures of the court in the early days and note the things they had. Large cardboard fans should be carried by the attendants. The king will want to write. A board with paper, pen, and tacks for the decree will be needed. Two folding screens should be placed to serve as a home for Daniel and an exit for the nobles in case no door is available. On the extreme left should be placed some chairs to serve as a lions' den.

Costumes. The costuming should likewise be simple. A long flowing robe, a gilt crown, and a scepter will be the king's equipment. The nobles and Daniel might wear turbans and bathrobes so as to suggest the Oriental garb. The attendants should wear ordinary knee trousers and customary garb.

Method of Procedure. The pastor or teacher should choose six boys who will be willing to

work seriously. He should read the story given below to them until they are thoroughly familiar with it. Then they should enact it as they feel it should be done. No word is spoken during the pantomime. On the Sunday morning before the pantomime begins, the pastor should read or tell the story given below to the congregation. At the close of the story the boys enact it.

Lesson Story

Long years ago there lived in the city of Jerusalem a young prince by the name of Daniel. While he was still a young man, the invading armies of Babylonia came marching through his country and he was carried a captive to the city of Babylon. The king wished to have one of the captured princes as his counselor, and Daniel was chosen. He was therefore carefully trained in all the wisdom and learning of Babylonia.

Some of the nobles of the king were not anxious to have this foreigner take a place they wanted. As soon as they had presented him to the king and had seen him crowned counselor, they began to plot his downfall.

The only fault they could find with Daniel was his religious habits. Each day he opened the windows of his house toward Jerusalem

and prayed to his God. This gave them an idea and they went to the king with a petition. When they were finally admitted to his presence, they said: "O king, live forever. Let a decree be made that any person who prays to any god or image save to thee for the next thirty days, shall be thrust into the den of lions." Then they waited breathlessly to see whether the king would suspect their plot.

The king felt flattered by their petition. He was to be worshiped in his realm as a god. They were to pray to him. So he called for his writing material and the decree was written and signed.

Now came the test for Daniel. What should he do? Stop praying? Close his doors and windows and pray? But Daniel never hesitated. He opened his windows as usual and prayed to the true God.

The jealous nobles had been watching Daniel, and when they saw that he prayed as usual they sped away to the king. When again they were admitted to his presence they said: "O king, live forever. Did you not make a decree that any person praying to any god or idol save to thyself for the next thirty days should be thrust into the den of lions?"

The king answered, "Yes."

They cried out, "O king, that Daniel, thy

counselor, has this day prayed three times to his God. He must be put in the den of lions."

The king saw the trap that had been laid for him, but since he had made the decree it must be carried out. He with his nobles took Daniel to the lions' den and put him inside. As night came on the king became more and more unhappy. He could not sleep. He failed to enjoy music. At length he commanded to be taken to the den of lions. When one of the servants had removed the door he shouted, "O Daniel, O Daniel." And quickly there came the answer from within: "O king, live forever. My God hath sent his angels and shut the lions' mouths and they have done me no harm."

Quickly did the king unbar the gates and allow Daniel to come forth. And there under the silent stars Daniel knelt and thanked the God who had helped him to meet the test.

The Pantomime As Enacted

Act I. King enters from left screen, followed by nobles and attendants. As he ascends the throne they kneel. Attendants take their places. He points toward the house of Daniel and commands him to be brought. Nobles exit and bring Daniel, who likewise kneels and then is given a place beside the king. Nobles

exit and register anger as they cross the stage. The king and Daniel exit and Daniel stops at his house.

Act II. Daniel steps to left of his house and prays, looking to right. Nobles come from behind screen, left, and point at him in derision. Then one stops as though struck by a bright idea. They exit and Daniel returns to his home. The king comes back to throne, followed by attendants. The nobles enter. They make demand for a decree. The king smiles. Calls for pen and paper. He writes decree and hands the document to the nobles. They take it and post it on Daniel's house. Then they exit behind their screen. Daniel comes out and reads the decree. Stands for a moment, then kneels in prayer. Nobles come out and find him there. They hasten away to the king. Are admitted by the lowering of the scepter. They speak of decree. King nods. They tell of Daniel. King looks sad. They insist, and finally all go and escort Daniel to lions' den.

Act III. King returns to throne. Uneasy. Shakes head. Rises as if to go. Sits again. Walks back and forth. Finally beckons, and they go to lions' den. He places hands at mouth as if calling. Face of Daniel appears through rounds of chair. King lifts back chair

and he comes forth. Kneels and prays toward right as king and attendants stand at attention. All exit, left.

THE DANGER OF LITTLE THINGS

PURPOSE: To show that we should beware of the small deeds of evil that will undermine character.

OBJECT MATERIALS: A piece of white cloth, a piece of mud which will leave a heavy black mark. (Use crayon for the smaller piece of mud.)

SCRIPTURE: The kingdom of heaven is likened unto a man which sowed good seed in his field: but while men slept, his enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat, and went his way. But when the blade was sprung up, and brought forth fruit, then appeared the tares also. So the servants of the householder came and said unto him, Sir, didst not thou sow good seed in thy field? from whence then hath it tares? He said unto them, An enemy hath done this.—*Matt. 13. 24–28.*

LESSON STORY

LET us review the work we have covered so far. We have found that we are each character builders. We build out of the thoughts we think, the deeds we do, the memories we store up, the habits we develop. At some time or another we meet temptation and our lives are tested. If we have built well, we overcome the temptation; if not, we give in. To-day I wish we might realize the danger that comes from allowing small evils to creep into our lives.

I have here a piece of cloth and some mud. I am going to rub this mud across the cloth. What will happen? A black mark is left where the mud touched the cloth.

But, now, children, I am going to take a very small piece of this mud and rub it across the cloth. It is a very small piece; surely it will do no harm. It will not leave a mark, will it? Let us try it and see. I rub the small piece across the cloth and there is the mark.

There is the lesson God wishes you to learn to-day. We think that because a sin is large it is dangerous, and we are right. But then we think of some little thing, some trivial wrong, some lesser violation of truth or honesty, and because it is small we feel that it won't count. But (holding up the cloth) it leaves its mark.

Habits Begin From Little Things

You remember that we spoke in an earlier lesson about the forming of habits. We found that a habit started from a single thought. When that thought passed through the mind it left its trace. The thought might become an act. That was definitely registered in the brain. If the act was repeated, it became a habit, for habits are merely the continued doing of any act. Herein lies the danger of little

things. It doesn't make any difference whether we begin by stealing a large amount or a small one; we are beginning the habit.

Examples of Small Temptations

James was sent to the store with twenty-five cents to purchase some articles. His mother told him that they would cost that amount. He found that they would cost only twenty-four. Now, James might have said: "It is only a penny and mother will never know. Why shouldn't I spend it?" But the boy knew that if he would take a penny without the consent of his mother, he might take a million dollars some day if the chance came. He would not start the bad habit.

A group of Girl Scouts were boarding a crowded street car. Some other girls got on at the same time and crowded forward without paying their fare. It would have been possible for the Scouts to have done so too, but they would not start the habit of stealing. They were too proud of their honor to sell it for five cents.

The girls were having a party. It came time for refreshments and some candy was being passed. There was one large piece of candy on the dish along with the smaller ones. Mary might have taken the largest piece, but she

did not do so, for that would have been selfish. She took one of the smaller pieces rather than cultivate the habit of selfishness.

Bob was building a boat. While working on it one day, he hit his finger. It was a bad bruise and he might have got mad and thrown the hammer. But he did not, for he was trying to control his temper, and he would not allow one single occasion to break the habit of control.

Appeal

Children, we are daily meeting the testing of our habits. This piece of cloth teaches us (holding up the cloth) that habits begin with small deeds as well as large ones. Jesus wishes us to sow only the good seed in our field of character, that no tares may spring up and grow.

SEEDTIME AND HARVEST

PURPOSE: To show that we reap what we sow.

OBJECT MATERIALS: Box with sand, background of cardboard, twigs for trees, sack with wheat and sack with weed seeds.

SCRIPTURE: Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap.—*Gal. 6. 7.*

But this I say, He which soweth sparingly shall reap also sparingly; and he which soweth bountifully shall reap also bountifully.—*2 Cor. 9. 6.*

Cast thy bread upon the waters: for thou shalt find it after many days.—*Eccl. 11. 1.*

THE UNGUARDED GATE

Lesson Story

(*Note:* Have sand box all ready before the lesson begins.)

To-day we are going to play farmer. I know all you children enjoy planting seeds, and we are going to plant some wheat. Here is our field. It is all tilled and ready for the planting of the seed. Here are some seeds in this sack. What kind of seeds are these? Wheat; that is right. In this sack I have some weed seed. We are a little short on wheat, so I am going to mix them all together. It won't make any difference anyway, will it? I'll just whisper to these seeds that they are supposed to grow wheat and it will be all right.

Now we get out the machinery and horses and drill in the seed. After a time it comes up nice and green. The weather is just right and it grows fast. But what is the matter with that field! Some of the sprouts don't act like wheat at all. They are branching out and sending out little leaves. Wheat doesn't do that.

Now, let us imagine that it is fall. We are going out into the field. What do you suppose we will find? Mostly weeds. Why? Because that is what we planted. The weeds crowded out the wheat. And we reap what we sow.

Application

Jesus told that same story once. He was very anxious that we should learn the lesson. He was referring to character when he told it. He wanted us to know that we get out of life what we put into it. There are some other stories in the Bible that teach the same truth. Let us recall two of them.

The Story of Haman

At one time the children of Israel were carried into captivity down in the land of Persia. There was a man there by the name of Haman. He hated the Jews and particularly Mordecai, the uncle of Esther. He went so far as to build a gallows in his yard where he expected to hang Mordecai. Then he went to the king and tried to get a decree that would bring Mordecai into his power. The girl queen, Esther, went to the king and pleaded in behalf of her people and her uncle. The story ends by Haman's being hanged on the gallows he had planned for another. He got out of life what he put into it.

The Story of Jacob

Another story with the same lesson is that of Jacob. Esau, his brother, was older than he and therefore should receive the birthright

blessing from their father. But Jacob wanted this birthright. So he dressed up like his brother and stole into his father's room. The father was almost blind and could not see the boy, but at length he blessed Jacob thinking it was Esau. Jacob had sowed deceit and treachery. Now watch the harvest. His brother returns and finds out what has happened. Jacob flees for his life. He goes to the childhood home of his mother. When he leaves that place, he has to sneak away secretly. His brother Esau is now a rich farmer in their old home. Jacob comes back trembling and in fear. Later in life, when an old man, the sons of Jacob deceived him about his son, Joseph, even as he had deceived his father in his youth. His life was made miserable because he was reaping what he sowed.

Sowing the Seeds of Helpfulness

There is another side to this law of God. If we sow good seed, we will just as surely reap a worthy harvest. Someone has said, "Give to the world the best you have, and the best will come back to you." This is also true. Lincoln is loved to-day because of the helpful deeds he planted in his life. He knew the truth of our Scripture lesson, which says, Scatter the deeds of kindness through life, and

after many days you will have your reward: "Cast thy bread upon the waters: for thou shalt find it after many days."

Appeal

Let us ask Jesus to help us that only seeds of kindness shall be planted in the garden of our heart.

LIBRARY OF PRINCETON
OCT

NOVEMBER

BUILDING HELPFULNESS INTO CHARACTER

THE MESSAGE OF THE GREAT STONE FACE

PURPOSE: To show that we become like the hero we admire.

SCRIPTURE: And he was there with the Lord forty days and forty nights; . . . And it came to pass, when Moses came down from mount Sinai with the two tables of testimony in Moses' hand . . . that Moses wist not that . . . his face shone while he talked with him. —*Exod. 34. 28, 29.*

They looked unto him, and were lightened.—*Psa. 34. 5.*

LESSON STORY

IN the White Mountains of New Hampshire is one of the marvels of nature called the Great Stone Face—the majestic features of a man fashioned on the mountainside. As you climb higher and higher along the Indian trail in Franconia Notch, you finally reach a vantage point where this calm countenance stands out clear and distinct against the western sky.

Here in a little quiet valley lived a boy, Ernest, and his mother. Each evening after the work was done they would sit on the doorstep and look away toward the Old Man of the Mountains. How noble he looked, how calm and composed! He seemed always to be thinking kindly thoughts and planning noble

deeds. The lad learned to love the Old Man who guarded their valley.

One night Ernest's mother told him an ancient tradition. For many years it had been believed that one day a man would return who would be the exact likeness of the Great Stone Face. He must be a native of the valley, he should have made a great success in the world, and on his return he would become ruler of the valley. Ernest listened eagerly to the story and then said, "Oh, I hope I shall see that man when he comes," and he looked lovingly toward the serene face there in the gathering twilight.

The days came and went. The boy looked forward to the time when some person should come who would be the likeness of his hero of the mountain. At length a rumor started that the great man was about to arrive. He was a native of the valley. He had amassed great wealth in the world. Gathergold was his name. Ernest was there to welcome him. When finally he stepped from his carriage, the people all shouted that he was the exact likeness of the stone face beyond. Ernest looked but once. He saw the selfish face of the merchant. "This is not the man who represents the Great Stone Face," he said sadly as he turned away.

In time the rich man died. People came to see that he was not the likeness of the Old Man. Years rolled by when again a rumor ran through the valley that one was to return who would fulfill their every expectation. He was a warrior of renown, Blood and Thunder by name. Ernest, now a young man, went with the others to welcome him. "Hurrah!" they shouted, "here is the exact likeness of the Great Stone Face." But to Ernest the hard, commanding face of the warrior little resembled the kindly face of his friend. In later years others came who claimed to fulfill the ancient tradition, but Ernest always turned away in disappointment.

Ernest was now a man of middle age. His days were spent in working on the farm or in doing deeds of kindness to his neighbors. He was known far and wide for his thoughtfulness for others. No person in need was ever turned away without aid. And each night as he looked at the Old Man of the Mountains he only hoped that he had lived as his hero would have him live.

One evening, in company with a poet, Ernest made his way to the settlement where he often spoke to the people. Here on a stone platform he would talk to them about the beautiful things of life and the noble way of living. He

began to speak this time. The poet was seated in such a position that the face of Ernest was in direct line with the face on the mountainside. As he looked at Ernest and then at the Old Man, he suddenly shouted, "Look, look; Ernest is the one who represents the Great Stone Face." Those who saw him realized that it was so. He had become like the one he admired.

Application

There is a great truth in this lesson. We do become like our hero. We may not in features, but we do in life and character. The boy who fashions his life after Lincoln and tries to live as Lincoln lived will find himself becoming like the one he admires.

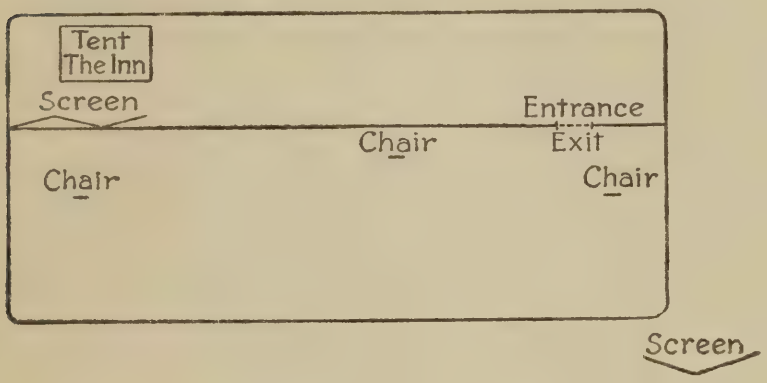
Jesus Christ is the world's greatest hero. He was the friend and helper of all men. Like a Scout Master he gathered his followers about him and taught them how to live nobly. He taught them to do their "good turn" daily. He showed them how to be strong in difficulty and calm in danger. The great Hero wishes us to pattern our lives after him, and to become like him.

(Adapted from the story, "The Great Stone Face," by Nathaniel Hawthorne.)

BUILDING HELPFULNESS

THE GOOD SAMARITAN—A PANTOMIME

PURPOSE: To show that we should cultivate the habit of helpfulness.



CHARACTERS

A Priest.
A Levite.
Good Samaritan and boy for horse.
Two robbers.
An Innkeeper.
Man to be robbed.

Properties: A stage with two levels will be better if available. A tent can serve as the inn. If no door is behind tent for entrance-exit, a screen will serve the purpose. Three chairs on the platform covered with canvas will suggest mountains. Another screen off-stage at extreme right will serve for an exit in case no door is there. A wallet will be needed for man going down to Jericho. Two paper cudgels for robbers. Bottle and cloth for Good Samari-

tan to bind up head. Bit of rope to lead horse for Samaritan.

Costuming: Look up pictures of the period. Use simple costumes. Bathrobes and turbans will help to suggest the Oriental. The man to be robbed should have a cape which can easily be stripped off.

Method of Procedure: This should be prepared in the same way that the other pantomime was prepared. The pastor or teacher should select eight boys who will take the work seriously. He should partially equip the platform. Then he should read the story to them until they are thoroughly familiar with it, after which they enact it as they feel it should be done. On the Sunday that it is to be given the pastor or teacher should read or tell the story very vividly to the congregation. When he has finished the boys enact the story. This must be done entirely by action and without words.

Lesson Story

There once lived a Jewish merchant in the city of Jerusalem. His trade was large and he often traveled to distant cities. It so happened that on a certain day he had to go to the city of Jericho. This was a particularly dangerous journey; the road led through rocky

gorges, sharp corners hid the view ahead, and deep caverns by the roadside formed a favorable hiding place for the robbers. It was the custom to wait until a traveler had passed around a corner and then attack him from the rear. They would beat him into insensibility, rob him of his valuables, and slip back to their dark caves to wait for the next victim. This was what happened to the merchant as he journeyed down the pass. They took his wallet, stripped him of his outer garments, and left him there to die.

Not long after this a priest came down the pass. He was one who served God in the Temple and it was his duty to help those in need. But the wounded man had been stripped of his outer garments, and the priest could not be sure that he was not one of the despised Samaritans. Rather than defile himself by helping a Samaritan "dog," he drew his garments about him and passed by.

Then a Levite came by. He also was a worker in the Temple. He too should have helped his fellow man here in need. He came near him but could not be sure that he was a Jew. So he also passed by and left the man to die.

It so happened that a Samaritan was traveling up to Jerusalem. He passed the haughty

priest and the Levite and then came upon the wounded man lying on the trail. He realized the danger in lingering here. He had money with him and might be attacked by the outlaws. But here was a man in need. The Samaritan quickly ran to his side. He bound up his wounds, pouring on oil and wine. He carefully lifted him onto his horse and took him to the inn a few miles distant. There he paid for his keep and promised to pay more if that was not enough. Then he went quietly on his way.

Jesus closed this story by asking which of the three men was the real friend; the haughty priest, the selfish Levite, or the despised Samaritan. When they answered, he said, "Go thou and do likewise."

Pantomime

Act I. Merchant, priest, and Levite behind upper screen. Innkeeper in tent. Robbers behind chair to the extreme right. Samaritan and horse behind lower screen.

The Jewish merchant starts out from behind upper screen and makes way slowly to entrance-exit mark, where he turns back. As he comes, left, the robbers spring out, strike him over the head with paper cudgels, tear cape from shoulders, throw him on the floor,

take wallet and return to hiding. Man lies perfectly still. Considerable pause.

Priest slowly walks toward entrance-exit, then turns. Haughtily passes by as far to front of platform as he can go. Long pause. Levite slowly comes down same path. Sees man. Stoops and touches him, then goes on to lower screen. Long pause.

Act II. The Good Samaritan comes from lower screen leading a boy on hands and knees. He has a well-filled wallet. Walks along beside his "horse." Sees man. Looks toward mountains and then hastens to side of man. Ties cloth round head. Pours water from bottle. Helps him astride "horse." Half supporting him they proceed to inn. There he pretends to call and innkeeper appears. They salaam, bow deeply from the hips. They lift man inside tent. Then coming outside the Samaritan gives money. Goes on his way and innkeeper returns inside. Empty stage. Long pause.

Prayer by the pastor.

Note to the Leader: A pantomime to be most successful should have absolute quiet on the part of both participants and audience. The one who is to be the man robbed should practice falling the long way of the stage. After a few trials he will do this easily. All walking

should be done slowly and with deliberation. Make long pauses between the different entrances.

A CHALLENGE TO HELPFULNESS

PURPOSE: To show that we should express our thankfulness by helping others.

SCRIPTURE: Bless the Lord, O my soul: and all that is within me, bless his holy name. Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits: who forgiveth all thine iniquities; who healeth all thy diseases; who redeemeth thy life from destruction; who crowneth thee with lovingkindness and tender mercies; who satisfieth thy mouth with good things; so that thy youth is renewed like the eagle's.—*Psa. 103. 1–5.*

LESSON STORY

WE are about to celebrate the beautiful Thanksgiving season. I wonder if we always appreciate the many blessings which we enjoy. That we may see how much we have to be thankful for, let us go back to that first Thanksgiving and see the hardships which our forefathers endured. Even with all of them they praised God with thankful hearts.

The Story of the First Thanksgiving

In the late fall of 1620 a band of Pilgrims "moored their bark on the wild New England shore." For days they had tossed on the wide ocean, and all were glad that at last a

home had been found. It was a bleak, barren bit of coast land. The forest loomed dark and forbidding in the distance, the ocean stormed and roared near them. But to these sturdy pioneers it offered a place where they could worship God as they wished.

A little boat put out for shore, bearing both men and women. As it came to the beach, Mary Chilton stepped out onto the now historic Plymouth Rock, saying, "I will be the first woman to set foot in our new city." With that they set to work. Trees were felled and dragged from the forest and the common house was built. Then their hardships began in real earnest. The weather grew colder. Food was scarce and soon sickness attacked the little colony. At one time only seven of their number were not sick. Night after night they carried another member of the group out onto the hillside for burial. With the coming of spring only half of their number remained.

Still they were not to be discouraged. They set about building homes for themselves. New log cabins arose around the common house. Squanto, their Indian friend, helped them to plant the corn and set traps for game. The grain and vegetables which they planted grew abundantly.

Then came the harvest season. Twenty

men and a few boys were left to gather in the grain. God had given them an abundant harvest. The corn was gathered and the wheat threshed. Wild fruits were picked from the forest and prepared for winter use. Seeing how they had prospered, these godly people decided to set aside a day of thanksgiving for all the blessings they had received. This was done. Two long tables were built outside their cabins and the food made ready. With one hundred of their Indian friends they sat down to eat. They partook of nourishing soup and brown bread, they ate the meat of the deer and wild turkey, they finished the meal with the pudding which the women had made. They were all satisfied and happy. For the food and protection and blessing which they enjoyed they thanked God. This was their first Thanksgiving day.

Things We Have to Be Thankful For

If we look about at this happy Thanksgiving time, we will see how much more we have to be thankful for than they had. We have comfortable homes while theirs were log cabins chinked with moss and leaves. We live protected from danger while they battled the wild beast, the savage Indian, and the fury of the weather. We travel along well-paved

roads in swiftly moving automobiles while they walked through the aisles of the forest. When sick we have the best doctors at our command, while they lay on crude cots and suffered in silence. We worship in our comfortable churches and have our good times together while they worshiped in rude log churches, Our lives are filled with comforts and blessings such as they never knew.

How We Can Help Others to Be Happy

Because of the things we enjoy we should try to pass our blessings on to those who are less fortunate. On Thanksgiving Day we can bring our fruit and vegetables, our meats and cakes, and can fill baskets to be sent out. The best way to be happy this year is to make others happy.

Jesus said, "It is more blessed to give than to receive." His was the joy of giving. Constantly He spent Himself for the welfare of others. Let us this year share the Master's joy by making others happy.

THE MESSAGE OF SIR LAUNFAL

PURPOSE: To show that we should continue our life of helpfulness.

SCRIPTURE: But whoso hath this world's good, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels of

compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him?—*1 John 3. 17.*

This is my commandment, That ye love one another, as I have loved you. Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends. Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you. —*John 15. 12, 13.*

Lesson Story

Far away in the North Countree of England there lived a proud and haughty knight by the name of Sir Launfal. Tall of stature he was, and strong of arm. From childhood he had been trained in the art of war until now as a young man he had become a mighty warrior. Many men had felt the force of his battleax, and not a few had been unhorsed by his trusty lance.

The castle of Sir Launfal had been the home of his forefathers for many generations. Grim and cold and forbidding it towered over the plains of the North Countree. Only the lords and ladies of high degree ever entered its gates. Kings had feasted in its banquet room, and nobles found a hearty welcome within its massive walls.

But the poor who dwelt in the North Countree found no welcome there. Many a beggar had sat at its gate and watched the festive occasions within but had never dared enter.

Many a weary traveler would have shared its warmth and cheer from the cold blasts of the outer air, but its surly gates closed with a clang against his entrance. The plaintive cry of the needy found little response in the heart of the haughty noble who dwelt within the castle.

It was a long-established custom among the knights of England to go in search of the Holy Grail, the cup from which Christ drank at the Last Supper. Sir Launfal decided to follow the example of his fellows and search for the Holy Grail. Accordingly, he ordered his servants to prepare his coat of mail and to make ready his most powerful war horse. On the night before his departure he slept on a bed of rushes beside the castle wall, hoping that he might have a vision which would help him on his journey. And as he slept he dreamed.

In his dream it seemed to be morning and he fared forth from his castle gate. As he galloped out, he saw a beggar crouching by the wayside. He scornfully tossed the man a piece of money and was riding on when he heard the man say, "He gives nothing but worthless gold who gives from a sense of duty." The beggar left the coin lying in the dust.

Sir Launfal rode away. He went to distant lands. He engaged in many combats. He

searched in unknown cities for the Holy Grail. He passed under the shadow of the Sphinx and fought at the foot of the Pyramids. He saw the caravans creep snakelike across the red-hot sands of the desert. But in all his quest he never found the prize which he sought.

The years came and went. Sir Launfal was becoming an old man. His faithful war horse had been killed in battle. Dressed in the plain garb of a pilgrim, he wandered from place to place. Finally he decided to return to his home in the North Countree. It was winter time when he reached his castle. His thin cloak and his crude sandals offered meager protection against the cold.

The old man came to his own castle. Another earl now ruled in his place, and he was driven from his own door as any common beggar would have been. He went out beside the brook which flowed near by and dreamed of the days of the past. As he sat and mused, a leper came and begged an alms of him. This time he willingly shared his crust of bread and the water from the brook.

Then came a strange transformation. Instead of a beggar by his side he saw the Christ. And in the wondrous light which shone about him he heard a voice which said,

"Not what we give but what we share,
For the gift without the giver is bare;
Who gives himself with his alms feeds three—
Himself, his hungering neighbor, and Me."

Sir Launfal awoke from his dream with a start. He stared about him questioningly to be sure that he was still the young knight who was about to fare forth on the following day. Then the force of his dream dawned upon him. He commanded that his coat of mail be hung up and that his war horse be led back to the stables. His task was to help the poor and needy ones who lived near by.

The gates of the grim old castle were opened wide to all who would enter. The hungry found here food in abundance. The sick were cared for. The poorest serf in all that North Countree found a friend in Sir Launfal. And no noble was more happy than he. Sir Launfal was investing his life in helpfulness.

DECEMBER

THE COMING OF THE GREAT HELPER

TRUE VALUES IN LIFE

PURPOSE: To show that true worth is not in external things but in noble character.

OBJECT MATERIALS: Tinseled paper, colored string, piece of mud, crude, brown paper, diamond ring.

SCRIPTURE: And the Lord said unto Samuel, How long wilt thou mourn for Saul, seeing I have rejected him from reigning over Israel? fill thine horn with oil, and go, I will send thee to Jesse the Bethlehemite; for I have provided me a king among his sons. . . . And Samuel did that which the Lord spake, and came to Bethlehem. . . . And he sanctified Jesse and his sons, and called them to the sacrifice. And it came to pass, when they were come, that he looked on Eliab, and said, Surely the Lord's anointed is before him. But the Lord said unto Samuel, Look not on his countenance, or on the height of his stature; . . . for man looketh on the outward appearance, but the Lord looketh on the heart.—*1 Sam. 16. 1–7.*

LESSON STORY

HERE is a beautiful package in my hand. It is wrapped in nice-looking paper and is tied with a bit of colored string. It is a very neat package. I want to sell it to you to-day. How much will you give me for my package? How much am I bid? Who will give me a dollar? You want to know what is inside? Don't bother about the inside; see how nice it

looks outside. Who will give me fifty cents? Not anything? Well, suppose we do open it and find what is inside. (Slowly open and crush mud in your fingers.) It is a valueless package; it contains only a piece of mud. Even though it had a fine-looking covering there is nothing valuable within.

Here is another package. It is wrapped in coarse brown wrapping-paper. How much will you give me for this one? One dollar? Well, we will open this one at once. Here it is; a diamond ring. This package would have been worth a considerable amount, wouldn't it? Despite its crude exterior there was something valuable inside.

Our lesson to-day is saying that the true worth of an individual is not to be measured by the kind of clothes he wears, nor by the amount of money he possesses. His shoes may be badly worn and his clothes be made of crude material, but that does not determine his value. In fact, he may have the dark-colored skin of the African or the yellow skin of the Chinese and still that would not determine his true worth.

Our true worth in this world is measured in the beauty of character we are developing and the service we render to others. If we had happened to be born with a black or

yellow skin, we would not want others to value us less because of that. We would want a chance to show what we could really do in life.

God's Message to Samuel

Even the prophet Samuel had to learn this message. Saul had been appointed the first king of Israel. He proved to be a bad man and God sent Samuel to anoint the next king. He came to the village of Bethlehem, to the home of Jesse and the shepherd lad David. There he sanctified the older sons of Jesse and the father and then called them to join with him in sacrifice.

The oldest son of Jesse was Eliab. He was a tall, strapping fellow, a real man of war, and looked as though he would make a fine leader. As soon as Samuel's eyes fell upon him he said, "Ah, that is the man." But God told him to wait a minute. He was looking only at the outward things and forgetting the true test of life. Then the voice said to Samuel, "Look not on his countenance, or on the height of his stature; . . . for the Lord seeth not as man seeth; for man looketh on the outward appearance, but the Lord looketh on the heart."

What an opportunity for Eliab! He might have been a king in a great kingdom. But

some sin of past life had blighted his character, and now he could not measure up at the testing time. Then came other sons of Jesse but they were also passed by.

Finally David, the youngest son, was called from the pasture where he was caring for the sheep. His life had been pure and clean and strong. As he stood before the prophet in all his youthful vigor, the Lord said to Samuel, "Anoint him as my king." His life had met the test.

Application

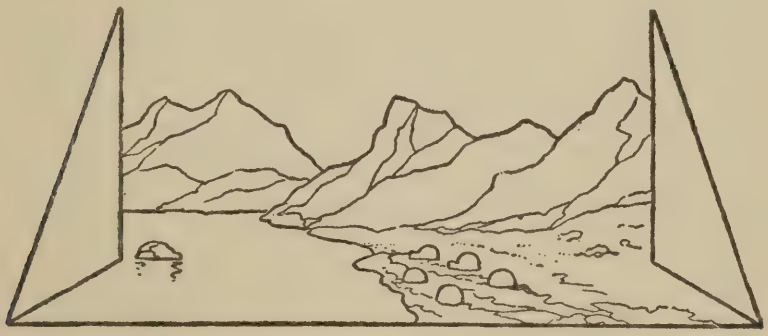
Let us remember this lesson as we associate with our companions. Sometimes we are tempted to think ourselves better than others. Remember that true worth is determined by the gold of character and not by the glitter of external factors. When the Great Helper came to live among men, He did not choose friends merely among the wise and great and wealthy. He found them everywhere and went wherever there was need. The Samaritan was as valuable to Him as the Jew. Let us also judge others by the beauty and nobility of their character—"for the Lord looketh on the heart."

THE COMING OF THE GREAT HELPER

IN THE LAND OF ETERNAL SNOWS

PURPOSE: To show that we should help the less fortunate peoples of the world.

OBJECT MATERIALS: Box and background, white paper representing mountains, five Eskimo huts of pasteboard, animal-cracker dogs and reindeers, small sled and boat. Imitation Eskimo peoples; a piece of glass to represent water; imitation icebergs.



SCRIPTURE: A vision appeared to Paul by night, the vision of a Macedonian standing and appealing to him with the words, "Cross to Macedonia and help us." —*Acts 16. 9, 10.*

Go to all the world and preach the gospel to every creature.—*Mark 16. 15.*

LESSON STORY

TO-DAY we are going on a trip to the far northland where a people live who have not the blessings we enjoy. We take a boat at Seattle and sail northward, passing between

mountains with snow-capped peaks, through the great ocean with icebergs, until we come to the land of eternal snow.

The Land of the Eskimo

What a strange country this is! There is not a tree nor shrub in sight. We see only the towering mountains and the ocean with its burden of ice. During the long winter night the spectral shadows of the northern lights dance across the sky. Sometimes a whale spouts or a walrus or seal shows dark against the snow. Beside these and the few peoples of the villages, all is one vast wilderness of white.

Now we are to visit an Eskimo village. If they were staying long in this place, they would build their homes underground. But we will imagine they are the houses of snow. Here I have some cardboard huts which I will place to represent their houses. Here are some dogs. I want one of the children to come and place these dogs in line so we can hitch them to the sled. (Have child come and place them in the sand near the hut.) Here are some reindeer. I want another child to come and place them in the background. This glass is the ocean; I will put this walrus out here on an ice pack. Here are the people; we can stand

them near their houses, and here is their boat by the shore. Now our picture is completed.

The Meager Life of the North

Now, imagine that you are compelled to go up there to live. You come to one of the snow houses and crawl in on hands and knees. How different from your own home! You come up inside. How barren it looks! A bank of snow is covered over with skins. This serves as a bed and chair. A little lamp of stone is beside the entry way. Its wick is of moss and the oil is from the walrus or the whale. There above your head is a frame on which damp clothes are hung to dry. That is about the equipment of the house.

They invite you to dinner. You sit down on the floor or the snow bench, and they hand you a piece of fish or a slice of walrus or whale. You may be fortunate enough to have bear meat. That is all they have for dinner. When supper times comes, you have the same. Breakfast is served, again of fish or meat. You want some green foods or vegetables, but these are not to be had.

You soon want something to read and ask for a book or magazine. They never heard of such a thing and don't know what you mean. You want to go to the store to buy

some needed articles, but they have no store. You long for some music, but they have no music. Then you think of all the comforts you had at home.

One day the food supply gives out. The wolves find the cache of fish and eat them all. You begin to be hungry, but there is nothing to do but go out into the bitter cold and sit on the ice and fish. The men begin to hunt for walrus or seal. You go one day without food, then two days, then three days. You begin to be desperate. Finally you become ill and want a doctor. They send the witch doctor, who tries to cure you by his incantations. You vow that if you ever get well, you will gladly help these people whose opportunity is so limited.

What the Missionaries Are Doing

That is something of the picture of the land of eternal snows. These poor, unfortunate people have not had a chance. The missionaries are now going to them with schools, hospitals, books, music and the things of better living. Think of the good that can be done if we will help these people.

Christmas season will soon be here. We want to share our fortunes with others. Let us bring a contribution to be sent to these

far-away places of the world to help make the people there more happy.

A LIGHT IN THE LAND OF DARKNESS

PURPOSE: To show that we should help the missionaries in the foreign fields.

OBJECT MATERIALS: Box and background, twigs for trees, circular cardboard representing cattle kraal, cardboard granaries, several huts of cardboard to be placed in a circle around the kraal.

SCRIPTURE: The people that walked in darkness have seen a great light: they that dwell in the land of the shadow of death, upon them hath the light shined. . . . For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace.—*Isa. 9. 2–6.*

LESSON STORY

(Have materials all set before telling story.)

LONG years ago there lived in the land of Africa a little lad by the name of Kuduku.

He was a cripple because when he was a baby his father had carelessly dropped him, causing his leg to be crooked. He lay on his back in the morning sunlight and watched the life of the village about him. The cattle were still in the cattle kraal in the center of the village. Outside of this stockade of posts were the granaries and the shelters where the girls and women were grinding millet and maize for the morning meal.

Kuduku heard the grunting of a pig in his hut behind him. His mother had told him to keep them out of the hut, so he crawled in through the low door and drove the intruder out. The smoke from the fire in the center made it difficult to see what was inside. But he knew that the trusty war-club of his father and his bows, together with the pots and medical herbs, were hanging from the pegs along the wall. These were the only furnishings of the hut.

As Kuduku crawled back into the sunlight, he little dreamed of the trouble that was soon to overtake them. Shortly his father fell sick with a fever. The witch doctor came and tried to drive away the evil spirits by beating upon drums. When the father grew worse and died they tried to find who had looked upon him with the evil eye. The lot fell upon

Sinabe, a neighbor, who was driven from the village and told never to return.

The loss of his father was soon followed by still greater trouble. As he lay before his hut one day he was startled by the appearance of strange men. They were whiter than any he had ever seen before. They rushed into the village and with their clubs began to strike all who came within range. Kuduku saw a man killed when he tried to defend himself. The terrible shriek of "slave trader" told him of the horror that was upon them. He knew that they would try to carry off all the strong men and women from the village and sell them in far-away lands. He saw them place a heavy iron chain about his mother's neck and drive her along the road out of the village. That was the last Kuduku ever saw of his mother.

These are some of the horrible conditions which existed in Africa a hundred years ago. But God was preparing a man who should bring light into this land of darkness. David Livingstone was soon to sail from his home in Scotland and work among the natives. He landed in southern Africa in 1841 and began learning the language. As soon as he could speak he struck northward into the interior and began to teach and preach and heal. As

a doctor he was able to help their bodies while working for their souls.

Year after year this valiant man of God labored for the welfare of the black men. He taught them to till their ground and to build their houses. He cured their diseases, and also told them about Jesus and the better way of living. He searched out tribes that were never known before. He discovered new lakes and rivers. In 1853 he started on an expedition across Central Africa through the trackless forest and jungle. He went through the home of the lion and elephant and rhinoceros, where there were venomous reptiles, and where numbers of savage tribes lay in ambush for him and his party, and robbed them of their provisions. Thirty times he was attacked by malaria. The natives begged to return. But Livingstone said, "God helping me, I will go on." After tremendous suffering they finally reached the coast.

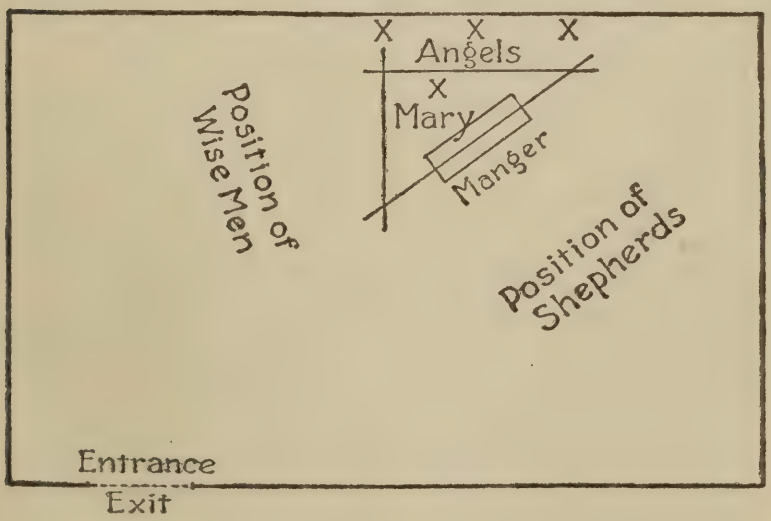
One day many years later while on one of his expeditions, Livingstone became too ill to go on or to talk. The next morning the natives found him on his knees by his bedside—dead in an attitude of prayer. He had brought the light to the land of darkness. Many other missionaries have gone to that land since then and are helping the natives to live the better life.

THE COMING OF THE GREAT HELPER

Since it is so near the happy Christmas season, would it not be well to bring of our money for the support of these men and women who are sacrificing so much on the foreign field? Let us bring our offering next Sunday for the people who still dwell in the land of darkness.

THE OTHER WISE MAN—A PANTOMIME

PURPOSE: To show that the greatest service in life is helpfulness.



TEN CHARACTERS

Mary	Three Wise Men
Three Angels	Three Shepherds

The improvised stable can be made in the following way. Secure three posts about six

feet high. Nail a cross piece at the bottom of each so as to make them stand erect. Set these in such a position as to have one at each corner of a triangle as shown in the diagram. Now nail a board from each one to the other so as to secure a strong framework. Lay other boards across these for the ceiling and cover it with a thick layer of straw. Have it such a height and size as to look in proportion for those who are seated in the audience. There are three chairs for the angels behind the manger and one for Mary. A manger can be made by taking a saw horse and turning it upside down. A slat across the top will hold the straw in. Fill it full of straw. If at night, place an electric bulb inside.

The shepherds need a crook. Take a young sapling and bend the top over, then tie it there. The wise men need some form of gift to present. Small boxes in gilded paper will serve the purpose.

Costumes. Simple costumes. The angels should be dressed in white with cardboard wings. Mary should also be in white. The shepherds should have knee trousers and a piece of skin or a gunnysack frayed out and thrown over the shoulders. The wise men may use bathrobes and turbans if nothing better is available.

Method of Procedure. The audience becomes quiet. A pause. Mary enters alone and slowly makes her way to her position in the improvised stable.

After another pause the three angels enter. They come to a position parallel with the manger and kneel. After bowing the head nearly to the floor, they slowly arise and take places behind Mary.

After another pause the shepherds enter. They come to position marked for shepherds. They kneel and bow. Then carefully lowering their staves they come to a seated position.

Another pause. The three wise men enter and come to position marked for them. They kneel and bow, then also take a seated position.

At this juncture the pastor or some other qualified person comes onto the platform and tells the story of "The Other Wise Man," by Van Dyke. The story should be mastered so that it can be told effectively.

At the close of the story the wise men are the first to move. They come to a kneeling position, bow and present their gifts. They rise and leave the stage as they have come. Next the shepherds come to kneeling position, bow, arise, and leave. Then the angels come around in front, form a semicircle and wait

until Mary is in the center and in front of them. They all go out together.

Suggestions. Several things should be considered to make this pantomime most successful. Absolute quiet should be observed throughout. All persons should move slowly. Shepherds, angels, and wise men should practice kneeling together. It is the most difficult part of the procedure. Let the person in the middle serve as pace-setter. First, place right foot behind left, then slowly go down until kneeling on right knee. Bring left knee down, then bow from the hips until the head is about a foot from the floor. Watch your neighbor so as to all work together. Finally all come up together. A little practice will make this work smoothly.

Also be careful not to move during the telling of the story. Any movement then detracts from the story. Get into a comfortable position before the speaker begins. Stay that way until he is through.

If used at night, this service can be made more elaborate. Colored lights can be used effectively. Appropriate songs can precede the coming of each group. The DeMoley boys can suggest appropriate costumes for the wise men. An appropriate background can be provided. Such a service will last an hour.

JANUARY

NEW YEAR RESOLUTIONS

THE LESSON FROM THE MIGHTY OAK

PURPOSE: To show that we should resolve that this year we will overcome all difficulties.

OBJECT MATERIALS: An acorn (picture of an acorn) and the picture of an oak tree.

SCRIPTURE: I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me.—*Phil. 4. 13.*

Do not let evil get the better of you; get the better of evil by doing good.—*Rom. 12. 21.*

Blessed is he who endures under trial; for when he has stood the test, he will gain the crown of life which is promised to all who love him.—*James 1. 12.*

LESSON STORY

THIS is the beginning of the new year. Perhaps you have already made your New Year resolutions. At all events, I want you to consider one with me to-day. It is that during this year you will overcome all obstacles.

I hold in my hand an acorn (picture of an acorn). See how small it is. Probably not more than an inch long. It falls into a crevice in the mountainside and begins to grow. Year after year it climbs toward the clouds. Its branches spread far out over the rocky ledge and serve as a shelter for bird and beast. Finally the tiny acorn has developed into the giant oak

Why Did the Tree Grow So Strong?

We might ask why this tree became so strong. The other trees in the sheltered valleys, which never felt the blast of winter nor the drought of summer, never became so strong. Why did the oak become strong?

It Used Its Obstacles to Develop Strength

The little tree knew how to use the difficulties of its life as a source of strength. One day Mr. Rain came by and saw the slender sapling. "I'll drown you out," he cried. And with that he poured down a torrent of water upon the little tree. But the water only unlocked the food in the crevices of the rocks and the little tree grew the more.

Then Mr. Sun looked down upon the mountainside and saw the struggling little tree. "Watch me dry him up," he said and turned his hottest rays upon the tree. But the tree took the energy of the sun's rays, and the sap from the roots and the brisk air of the mountain and welded them together to form his starch food. And the young sapling grew the more.

Then the West Wind passed by. "I'll uproot that young oak, just watch me!" he cried. So he blew and blew until the tall young tree bent almost to the ground. But the oak dug

its roots deeper into the crannies of the rocks and built its fibers of tougher material. And the stalwart young tree grew the more.

At length Old Winter came by. "Aha," he cried with his frosty laugh, "here is a young oak who thinks he can live here on my mountainside. I'll freeze him out." So he sent his snows and frost and covered the earth with a mantle of white. But the strong young oak drew all the precious nourishment from the leaves and branches and buried them deep in the roots under the coverlet of snow. Then it patiently waited for spring. And the mighty oak had become the monarch of the forest.

The Lesson From the Oak

From the oak we learn a most worth-while lesson. It took each and every obstacle that it met and made that obstacle serve for its own good. It grew stronger by overcoming difficulty. Each new hard task became but another stepping-stone to success. It developed the habit of mastery.

Application

Children, I want you to develop that habit of mastery this year. I want you to make this one of your New Year resolutions. You will meet difficulties and obstacles. In the

past you may have let them master you. Now I want you to be master of them.

In your school work there will be hard problems to solve. What will you do when you meet a particularly hard one? Skip it? Give up? No, never. Go at it and plod on until you win. Remember that persistence and perseverance can overcome all obstacles. The great men of the world have seldom been geniuses but have been plodders. They refused to be defeated. They grew strong by overcoming obstacles.

You will meet temptations this year. Even these may become a source of strength as you overcome them. You will want to *control temper*, to *root out jealousy and revenge*, to become too big to *cheat or lie or steal*, to be strong enough to say "No" when others would do wrong. I want you to win every moral battle. Develop the habit of mastery.

THE UNNOTICED HEROES OF LIFE

PURPOSE: To show that we should do our work faithfully regardless of the notice or approval of others.

SCRIPTURE: Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life.—*Rev. 2. 10.*

He who is faithful with a trifle is also faithful with a large trust,

And he who is dishonest with a trifle is also dishonest with a large trust.—*Luke 16. 10.*

NEW YEAR RESOLUTIONS

And let us run with patience the race that is set before us.—*Heb. 12. 2.*

Lesson Story

This is the second Sunday of the New Year and I wish to suggest another New Year resolution. Let us state it this way: let us do our work faithfully this year regardless of the notice or approval of others.

Once in a while we read of some boy or girl who has done some heroic act and has received a just reward for it. He may have rescued a child from a burning building or carried one out of danger's way or saved one from drowning. People learn of it and reward him for his bravery.

But not often do these opportunities come in life. We might live an entire lifetime and never have a chance to do one of these things. That does not mean, however, that we cannot enter the ranks of the heroes. The world is full of unnoticed heroes who quietly and faithfully do their task and never receive public notice. They are as truly heroes as the one who is rewarded publicly for his deed.

A True Hero Does Without Complaint the Task He Dislikes

Every one of us will have some task which he dislikes. It may be washing dishes. It

may be getting a grammar lesson. It may be mowing the lawn or milking cows. This is the one task that takes the joy out of life. We feel that we could be entirely happy if it were not for this one task.

The real hero quickly and quietly goes at the task he dislikes. Without whining or complaining he rolls up his sleeves and begins it with a will. He has learned not to put off the disagreeable job until the last. It usually grows worse by being left. He attacks it first and sticks to it until it is done. To do without complaint the task which you dislike shows the stuff out of which heroes are made.

The True Hero Does the Kindly Deeds Even if Unnoticed

Some people are willing to do a helpful act if it will be praised, but not otherwise. The true hero cultivates the habit of helpfulness. It makes little difference to him whether others see or not. He goes about doing good for the joy of the doing. He lifts the little bird back onto the branch when it has fallen out of the nest. He closes the neighbors' gate because something might go in and spoil their flowers. He kicks the stone out of the road because someone might receive a bump if it is left there. He picks up a match because it might get

lighted and cause a fire. He is alive and alert to do the things that *ought* to be done.

The True Hero Works Conscientiously at Any Task That Is Assigned

The true hero believes in hard work faithfully done. He does not slight his work because no one is looking. He realizes that if he is careless and dishonest in little things, he may be in large ones. When sent into the garden to clean out the weeds he does it thoroughly. He could easily do shoddy work and no one would know, but he refuses to be that sort of person. He is building the foundation of a successful life by doing honestly each task that is his to do.

The Example of the Old Italian Sculptor

There was once an old Italian sculptor who lived in the city of New York. He was not well known by many people, but those who knew him always felt assured that his work would be satisfactory.

It so happened that a noted contractor was building a large office building. He needed some marble frieze work for the doorways and decided to bring the work to the old sculptor. So he brought a piece of marble and the pattern and set the old man to work, never once

telling what it was for. The man worked carefully until it was completed and then received another block and the pattern. Finally the contractor ceased to bring materials and the man knew his task was done. He had worked only on the smaller separate blocks and never saw the completed whole.

One day he was walking down a noted thoroughfare in the city when he noticed a new building. Coming closer he was struck by the beauty of the friezework above the entry. Then suddenly he saw his own work in its entirety. Reverently he took off his hat and said, "Thank God, I did my best."

Application

We are working at the separate tasks day by day, a bit at a time. At the end of the year we will look back at the completed whole. May we have worked so well that we can look back and say, "Thank God, I did my best."

FINDING THE FOUR-LEAF CLOVER

PURPOSE: To show that persistent effort is the true basis of success.

OBJECT MATERIALS: A blackboard and piece of crayon.

SCRIPTURE: Now after the death of Moses . . . the Lord spake unto Joshua . . . saying, Moses my servant is dead; now therefore arise, go over this Jordan, thou,

and all this people, unto the land which I do give to them. . . . There shall not any man be able to stand before thee all the days of thy life. . . . Be strong and of a good courage. . . . Have not I commanded thee? Be strong and of a good courage; be not afraid, neither be thou dismayed: for the Lord thy God is with thee whithersoever thou goest.—*Josh. 1. 1–9.*

Lesson Story

We have another New Year resolve for to-day. I know all of you have gone out sometimes to hunt for four-leaf clovers. Probably all of you have found them. You enjoy looking for them, for you say they bring you good luck.

I have here on the blackboard the four-leafed clover and will write in the letters L-U-C-K. That is what the four-leafed clover stands for. But I want to add another leaf. We will put it in here by the stem and add the letter "p" so that it now reads P-L-U-C-K. As you are preparing for life I want you to trust to pluck rather than to luck.

Luck is a fool's byword. It may help a person get a position but it is not the stuff that will keep it. He who trusts to luck will fail. Pluck is the persistence that wins. It knows no defeat. It is courage and grit and hard work. Pluck places us on the royal road to success.

Caleb, the Plucky Man of Valor

Long years ago a band of Israelites were searching for a promised land. The Lord commanded that twelve spies be sent out to spy out the land. Among them was the courageous youth, Caleb. The spies went. They saw the fruitful valleys; they saw the mighty fastnesses of the mountains. They also saw the Anakim, the giants.

Report of the Spies

When the men returned, ten of them said the country could not be taken; only two, Joshua and Caleb, had courage enough to believe they could possess it. That people never marched into the land of promise. They wandered about until a new generation had grown that had more faith and courage than they possessed. Because of the pluck and courage of Joshua and Caleb the Lord promised them any tract of land they might choose as their inheritance.

The Land Is Taken

After many years of weary wandering the Israelites moved into their future home. They were able to conquer most of it, but the hill cities of the Anakim were always a source of trouble. These giants waited in their moun-

tain retreats until the time of harvest, then made a foray into the valley and took all the crops and returned to live comfortably until the next harvest. They were not conquered.

Caleb Asks for His Inheritance

At length Caleb came to the leaders and asked for his plot of ground. "You remember," he said, "that I was promised any tract that I might choose for an inheritance."

They answered "Yes," and supposed that he would take the most fruitful plain in all the country. But Caleb said, "Give me the hill of the Anakim."

The leaders looked at him in amazement. Would he choose that when he might have the best? He only replied, "Give me the hill of the Anakim." So they gave it to him gladly and wished him Godspeed.

The old warrior gathered his trusty followers around him. He told them of the hard task that awaited them. But they were enthusiastic to go. They came to the hill of Hebron and waited for the dusk to fall. As the darkness gathered they knelt in prayer while their leader asked that they might have faith and courage to conquer. With the coming of dawn the city was theirs. Their plucky champion had led them again to victory.

Application

It was not luck that made Caleb the victor of many battles. It was his trust in God and in his own right arm. God is saying to us to-day as he said to Joshua in the Scripture lesson, "Be strong and very courageous." Let us go out into this New Year with the quiet determination to master our difficulties and come off more than conqueror. For he who builds pluck into life is on the royal road to success.

WHERE DUTY CALLS

PURPOSE: To show that we should enlist in the service of Jesus Christ.

SCRIPTURE: Then Jesus said to his disciples, "If anyone wishes to come after me, let him deny himself, take up his cross, and so follow me; for whoever wants to save his life will lose it, and whoever loseth his life for my sake will find it."—*Matt. 16. 24, 25.*

LESSON STORY

A FEW years ago there lived in a quiet English village a farmer lad by the name of Henry Maclean. Although a hero at heart, he had lived an unnoticed life with his parents in the village. It so happened that the Boer War broke out about this time and the recruiting officers came to his village. Henry Maclean made his way to their office to enlist.

He received the customary examination and passed successfully when the officer asked him the customary question, "Will you go where duty calls you?" The usual answer was, "Aye, aye, sir." But Maclean gave the significant reply, "Aye, aye, sir; and farther."

The recording officer wrote the words down in his book and the incident was forgotten. The young man went with the others to train for service.

It was weeks later during the siege of Ladysmith. The British forces had been hard pressed for many days by the enemy. During one of the days a small force of men had been sent out to reconnoiter. They were cut off by the enemy's fire and most of them lost their lives. One of the beloved captains lay out there wounded and ready to die. A call came for volunteers who would go and bring him in. Henry Maclean stepped quietly from the ranks and volunteered to go. He made his way from the fortifications; he crept forward amid a rain of bullets; he found the captain and carried him carefully back to his companions. Just as he was about to enter the lines again, a bullet passed through his heart.

News of his heroic deed sped back to England. They looked up the record of his enlistment

and found there the question and answer, "Will you go where duty calls you?" "Aye, aye, sir; and farther." And now in his home village is a tablet raised to his memory with the officer's question and his heroic response, "Aye, aye, sir; and farther."

Jesus Is Calling for Volunteers

During the past weeks of the New Year we have been thinking of resolutions. The one for to-day is the most important and most serious of all. I hope every child of eleven or twelve years will consider the call of Jesus Christ to his life.

The Cost of Enlistment

Before we do enlist let us count the cost. Jesus wants us to have the best things in life. He will not "withhold any good thing" from us. He wants us to have the truest enjoyment, to go to places of real value, to see the worth-while things, to do the deeds that make for greatness. He wants us to make the most of life.

He may also ask for sacrifice, for Christ calls us to do the hard things. No red-blooded boy or girl wishes to be called to do the easy things. He wants the challenge of the difficult. Christ says we must be willing to deny self for the sake of others.

NEW YEAR RESOLUTIONS

You remember the story of the young man in Jesus' time who lived in a home of culture and refinement. He was a young ruler and wanted to join the ranks of Jesus' disciples. He came and asked what he must do to become a disciple. Jesus told him that he must be willing to do the hard things, to sacrifice self for the cause, to labor for the good of his fellows. But when this youth saw that discipleship cost something, he was not willing to pay the price. He turned away and we never hear of him again.

Jesus is asking absolute loyalty to his cause. No one would want to be like Judas, who betrayed his best friend, or like Peter when he followed afar off. We want to live up to the teachings of Jesus and build helpfulness and honesty and truthfulness into all of our lives.

Appeal

At Easter time we are going to have Decision Day. I hope many of you will be preparing to make a definite stand for Jesus Christ at that time. Let us become friends for life with this our ideal Hero.

To the Pastor or Teacher

For the next two months the pastor and teachers should see each boy and girl who is over twelve years of age and ask them to

make a decision of their life to Christ. A thoroughgoing program of personal interviews should be arranged. Let every one be spoken to before Easter time.

LOOKING THROUGH BLUE GLASSES

PURPOSE: To show that we should cultivate the habit of cheerfulness.

OBJECT MATERIALS: Pieces of red, yellow, green, and blue glass.

SCRIPTURE: I am come that they might have life [happiness], and that they might have it more abundantly. —*John 10. 10.*

LESSON STORY

TO-DAY we can make still another resolution. Let us resolve that we will be cheerful and happy this year regardless of what happens. Let us resolve to cultivate the happy habit.

Here are several pieces of colored glass. I want one of the children to come here and help me with our experiment. I will close one of his eyes and then ask him to tell us the color of the world as I place a piece of glass before the other eye. What color do you see now? Red. And now? Green. And still again? Blue. What is the reason that things look so strange? Is there anything wrong with the world? No, the trouble is with us. We are looking through colored glasses.

Blue Monday Folks

Have you ever heard of "a blue Monday"? Some children get up on Monday so cross and contrary that they are very hard to get along with. They are poor company for themselves or anybody else.

Here is one who is constantly complaining. He forgets the Scout law which says a "Scout is cheerful," and makes the home miserable with his complaint. Something is wrong with the food. His problems are too hard, the teacher is no good, it is too hot or too cold. He whines and complains about what is done or what is not done. Everything is out of joint. And all the time the trouble is with himself. He is viewing the world through blue glasses.

Here is another chap who sulks. If he can't have his own way, he refuses to play at all. He goes off into a corner and grouches about it. I once knew a boy who wanted a baseball team. He got the fellows together, and because he was not elected captain he refused to play in the team. He was a poor Scout.

How Others Have Met Difficulty With a Smile

The one who whines and complains, the one who sulks and grouches, the one who frets and

nags about things, should see how some people have met real trouble in life.

Paul and Silas were once in prison. They had been beaten until their backs were bleeding and bruised. Then they were thrown into the inner keep, or dungeon, their arms and legs were stretched in the stocks, and they were left for the night. There was great suffering in that prison life. But did they complain? Did they whine because of hardships to be endured? No, for we learn that about midnight they began to sing and have a praise service. They were cultivating the habit of cheerfulness.

Here is a man whom every boy loves because of a story he wrote. It is Robert Louis Stevenson, and the book is *Treasure Island.* Probably few boys know that when Stevenson was writing this story he was so ill that he could not get up out of bed. For many years he was in poor health, but he never complained. On the contrary he kept cheerful and wrote cheerful stories to help others.

Here is a young lady who is deaf, dumb, and blind. She never sees the sunset, she never hears the song of the birds, she is shut into her world of darkness and silence. But with all those handicaps Helen Keller refused to complain. She decided to make her life use-

ful and to be happy. First she learned to read. This was done through the fingers. Then she decided to do a much harder thing, to talk. After years of effort she succeeded. Then she was not satisfied. She wanted to go to college. Few books were written for her in the Braille system. Her own teacher went along and read to her by means of the fingers, and thus they mastered the many books to be read in college. While others were out playing and enjoying the day, Helen Keller could have been found in her room with her teacher, painfully going over the books. Surely she had cause to complain about hard tasks in school. But she preferred to live happily. And at length she graduated from college with high honors.

Application

These are a few examples of how people have met the truly hard tasks of life with a smile. If they could be cheerful in the face of such difficulties, should we not be ashamed to complain about what we meet? Let us cultivate the happy habit this year. A good Scout is cheerful.

FEBRUARY

JESUS, OUR IDEAL HERO

LINCOLN, THE BELOVED

PURPOSE: To show how Lincoln lived the teachings of Jesus.

SCRIPTURE: And Samuel died; and all the Israelites were gathered together, and lamented him, and buried him in his house at Ramah.—*1 Sam. 25. 1.*

"Ye shall know them by their fruits."—*Matt. 7. 16.*

LESSON STORY

TO-DAY we have met to do homage to the memory of our beloved Lincoln. All over this nation people will be thinking of the man who by sheer strength of character rose from a log cabin in Kentucky to the White House. He it was who lived the virtues we have been studying about—courage and honesty, kindliness and honor. For this reason he has become the hero of every boy and girl.

Lincoln, the Youth of Principle

Like the mighty oak, the boy Lincoln grew strong by overcoming obstacles. Think of the hardships he had to meet. His work in the field and forest developed a powerful body. Books were few, but he mastered them. He spent his evenings reading by the light of the fireplace and ciphering with charcoal on the shovel. By constant effort he trained and developed both mind and body.

More than that, Lincoln realized that he was the weaver of his character. He persistently refused to allow any habit to get started in his life which would later be harmful. How well we love the story of the young clerk who, when he had unwittingly given short weight to a woman, a shortage which represented three cents, walked several miles to repay the money. He would not allow even the appearance of evil in his life.

Lincoln, the Youth of Kindly Deeds

As a child about the home, he began practicing his ideal of helpfulness. When asked to do any chore he did it gladly and without complaint. He also watched for opportunities to do more than was asked of him. His stepmother many years later said of him, "Abe was a good boy, and I can say what scarcely one woman—a mother—can say in a thousand. Abe never refused, in fact or appearance, to do anything I requested of him. . . . He was a dutiful son to me always."

All during his later life he continued his habit of kindliness. At one time a stranger came to his community. The Clary Grove boys, a band of ruffians, usually "initiated" any person who came among them. Lincoln saw that their treatment would be too severe

for this elderly man, for they were going to toss him in a blanket. He interfered with their "fun," and when they made some remarks he challenged any one of the group to harm the man. No one wished to test the strength of his strong right arm. They learned to respect this champion of the rights of others.

Lincoln could not stand to see dumb animals harmed or abused. One time when a boy, he saw some wild turkeys near his house. He shot one with his father's rifle. Then he felt sorry for having taken the life of this creature. The kindly heart of the boy could not stand for harming of God's creature. Like a true Scout he was "kind to dumb animals."

Lincoln, the Greatheart

When finally he was elected to the White House, he showed his true greatness as never before. He was then able to keep a pledge he had made many years ago when a youth. You will recall the time when he went down the Mississippi on a flatboat and for the first time saw a slave market. Fathers were being separated from their families and mothers from their children. The injustice of it stung him to the heart. "Come away, boys," he said, and then added, "If I ever get a chance to hit that thing, I'll hit it hard." Now he was

President and he remembered the hardships of the Negro. He wrote the Emancipation Proclamation which liberated four million slaves.

Lincoln, the Greatheart, was always thinking about the welfare of others. Fathers came to tell him of their troubles. Mothers besought him to spare the lives of their sons, who had fallen asleep on sentry duty. Children confided to him their difficulties. Always he tried to bring cheer and happiness into their lives.

To-day he lies buried in Springfield, Illinois. His tomb has become a national shrine, and thousands go to stand beside the final resting-place of the one who lived so nobly and well.

JESUS DOES HIS GOOD TURN

PURPOSE: To show that we should love the great Ideal Hero.

SCRIPTURE: And it came to pass . . . that he passed through the midst of Samaria. . . . And as he entered into a certain village, there met him ten men that were lepers, which stood afar off: and they lifted up their voices, and said, Jesus, Master, have mercy on us. And when he saw them, he said unto them, Go show yourselves unto the priests. And it came to pass, that, as they went, they were cleansed. And one of them, when he saw that he was healed, turned back, and with a loud voice glorified God, and fell down on his face at his feet, giving him thanks. . . . And he said

unto him, Arise, go thy way: thy faith hath made thee whole.—*Luke 17. 11–19.*

Lesson Story

The evening sun was flooding the valley of Samaria with crimson twilight as Simeon reached the brow of Mount Ebal. In the distance loomed Mount Gerizim with its temple on the summit. Even now the evening sacrifice was being offered and the temple choir was chanting the psalms of David. Below the temple on the rugged mountain side, the city of Sychar straggled along the slopes. And farther below in the valley stood his own little home.

Simeon usually paused at the summit of the mountain to enjoy the view which spread out before him. But to-night he strode hastily forward toward his home. Thrusting open the door, he entered. His wife and little daughter came forward to greet him as usual.

"Esther," he said in a hushed tone, "a great misfortune has overtaken our friend Abraham. To-day while working in the fields he noticed a strange color on his hands and when he went to the priest, he was told that it was leprosy. Now he must stay at the leper colony and never come home again."

The mother and the little daughter, Ruth, looked at their father in dumb horror. The

word "leprosy" struck terror to their hearts. They saw the picture of a colony where poor, helpless victims wandered about crying, "Unclean, unclean." Their first thought was that Simeon might catch the dread disease.

"It's all right, Esther," said the husband, trying to appear brave. "I am strong and well and will not take the disease." But despite his words of assurance a cloud hung over this happy family. He had used the tools which the leper had used and thus had been exposed.

It was not long before their worst fears were realized. Strange blotches appeared on his hands. The priest pronounced him unclean. Saying a sad farewell to his wife and child, he went slowly down the road toward the colony of death.

The wife and child continued to manage the farm. Each day they took a package of food and placed it on a rock not far from the place where they knew he must be. When they had gone, Simeon came and took the food.

A year passed by, and then another. A great change had come over the man. His own family would scarcely have known him. He was emaciated and disfigured.

One day he sat upon a rock and wished that he might die. He was valueless and a

burden to those he loved. While thus musing he heard a voice calling, "Father, father." Looking up, he saw his daughter Ruth rushing into the camp. In alarm he arose and started toward her. "Father," she cried, "come quick; Jesus is passing by. He will heal you. Come." The child in her eagerness grasped him by the hand and fairly dragged him toward the highway. Others hearing her words followed.

As speedily as they could travel, they came to a spot where Jesus must go by. Even now they could see a cloud of dust in the distance and knew that he was coming. When within calling distance they cried, "Jesus, Master, have mercy on us; take pity on us." Jesus looked upon them and his heart was moved with compassion. "Go and show yourselves to the priest," he said in gentle tones.

Ruth again grasped her father by the hand, and they started toward the city of Sychar. But before they had gone far a strange transformation began to take place. The flesh began to come back. A glow of health began to creep throughout Simeon's entire frame. With wondering eyes he watched the change. When he realized that he was healed, he gave a shout of joy. Together father and child turned back to where Jesus was coming and

threw themselves at his feet. The Master quickly raised them up and placing his hands upon them said, "Arise, go thy way: thy faith hath made thee whole."

Once again the Master had brought happiness into a sorrowing home.

THE FRIEND OF CHILDREN

PURPOSE: To show that we may be friends of Jesus.

SCRIPTURE: Now people even brought their infants for him to touch them; when the disciples noticed it they checked them, but Jesus called for the infants. "Let the children come to me," he said, "do not stop them: the Realm of God belongs to such as these."—*Luke 18. 15–17.*

LESSON STORY

"FATHER, may I go with you to the synagogue?" asked Ruth as her father left their happy home in the ancient city of Capernaum. "Yes, daughter," said the father with a smile. So Jairus, the ruler of the Jewish synagogue, and his golden-haired daughter set out for the stately synagogue on the hill.

How bright and cheery the city looked on this happy spring morning! The cobblestones of the street and the gray walls of houses still sparkled with the dew of the morning. Looking far ahead they could catch a glimpse of the blue waters of Galilee. As they

approached the market place, they saw how the merchants had already spread out their wares for the customers.

But presently their path was blocked by a throng. Loud cries came to their ears, "Jesus of Nazareth, he is coming." Almost before they knew it they were in the center of the crowd. Jesus paused for a moment and performed one of his wonderful miracles before their very eyes. A man, lame for many years, had cried out to be healed. Jesus healed the man and they heard his prayer, and then the crowd had passed on.

"What a wonderful man he is, father!" said Ruth, thoughtfully, as they proceeded on their way. "How many kindly deeds he does! I wish I might do more kindly deeds."

"I think you now do many deeds of helpfulness, little daughter," answered the father, looking down at his only child.

"Only wait until I am twelve years old, then I will do lots more," she said, gayly. "And, father, that is not far off, for I will be twelve this fall." And Ruth began to tell of all the things she would do when at length she had passed her twelfth birthday.

Little did she know of the days that were ahead. Little did the father dream that his beloved child would soon be attacked by an

incurable malady. But it was even so. Before many days the child began to complain of feeling tired. Week by week she grew less strong. Day by day the color faded from her cheek. Soon she could no longer romp and play with her companions.

Finally came the day when the child had to remain in bed. Jairus remained with her, for he feared to leave lest she should die during his absence. The physicians had given up all hope. They were helpless before this nameless malady.

As the father sat there wondering what might be done she whispered, "Father, if Jesus were here——" and her voice died out in a sigh. The father awoke with a start. He had forgotten the Great Healer who had so often done the kindly deeds in the streets of Capernaum.

Quickly he arose from the bedside. He went out into the street. Where could Jesus be found? Not knowing, he started toward the market place, for there they might tell him of the whereabouts of the man. But even on his way he heard the tumult of the throng. Jesus was in their midst.

He thrust his way in among them, brushing them right and left. He came to where Jesus stood and fell at his feet, saying: "Master,

my little daughter is at home lying at the point of death. Can't you come and do something for her?" Jesus at once consented, and they started on their way.

The throng made way for the beloved ruler of the temple, but as they were proceeding a messenger came saying that the child had already died and his mission was useless. When Jesus heard the words he said: "Have no fear. Only believe, and she will be restored to life."

The grief-stricken father continued toward his home. Already the friends of the neighborhood had gathered and were weeping with the mother over the loss of her only child. Jesus pushed his way in and said, "Leave off wailing; for she is not dead, but asleep." Then with the father and mother he entered the room where the child lay. Taking her by the hand he said, "Little darling, awake." Then they watched breathlessly as the strength returned to the child's body and she opened her eyes. Soon she was walking about as usual.

As Jesus was about to leave the home, he placed his hand on her head and said in his quiet way, "Little darling, you shall still do many kindly deeds." And from that hour Ruth and the Master pledged themselves as partners in kindness.

THE UNGUARDED GATE

PARTNERS IN HELPFULNESS

PURPOSE: To show that we should be active partners with Jesus Christ in doing helpful deeds.

SCRIPTURE: Then shall the King say to those on his right, "Come, you whom my Father has blessed, come into your inheritance in the realm prepared for you from the foundation of the world.

For I was hungry and you fed me,
I was thirsty and you gave me drink,
I was a stranger and you entertained me,
I was unclothed and you clothed me,
I was ill and you looked after me,
I was in prison and you visited me."

Then the just will answer,

"Lord, when did we see you hungry and fed you? or thirsty and gave you drink? . . ." The King will answer them, "I tell you truly, insofar as you did it to one of these brothers of mine, even to the least of them, you did it to me."—*Matt. 25. 34–37; 40, 41.*

LESSON STORY

THE three friends, Amos, John, and Benjamin, burst out of the synagogue school in Bethsaida with a shout of joy. All day long they had been studying the Laws of Moses, but now they were free to spend the rest of the day as they chose. They had planned a walk along the shore of Galilee and were eager to be on their way.

They dashed down the street toward the home of Amos, where their fishing kits had been left. "I think we ought to go where the

river empties into the lake," said John as they ran; "there is always good fishing there." Benjamin argued for the flat rock, and at length it was decided to go to the usual fishing place at the flat rock. There they would build a fire and cook their fish—if they caught any.

Amos' mother saw the boys as they entered the house. As they rushed about the place gathering up their belongings she slipped a lunch into Amos' pocket. "Sometimes fish don't bite well," she said, smiling as she recalled the tired, hungry boys who sometimes came straggling home.

The boys quickly made their way to the flat rock and gathered the driftwood for the fire. Soon it was snapping and crackling on the sand. Then they went to fishing.

"Have you heard anything more about Jesus of Nazareth?" asked John after a long period of silence.

"Yes, he was in Capernaum not long ago," replied Amos. "I heard father saying he thought Jesus would be here soon. He was moving this way with his disciples."

"He healed my uncle in Capernaum," said Benjamin, earnestly. "We were all so happy, for now he can help father with the nets. And he used to suffer so much."

Again the conversation lagged as the boys continued to fish. After a bit Amos suggested that they race to the top of a nearby hill. They were off like the wind and soon stood panting on its summit.

"What is that over there in the valley?" asked Amos as his gaze wandered northward. "It looks like people, yes, and thousands of them."

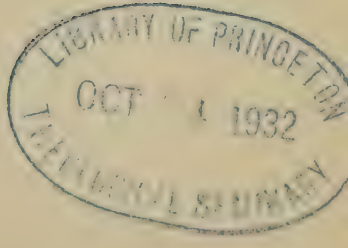
"It is people," said John. "It must be Jesus and the multitude. Let's go and see."

The boys struck off down the hillside and across the grassy valley toward the place where the multitude was gathered. In the center was the familiar figure of Jesus and about him, his disciples. They edged their way through the throng until they were close to him. There they looked and listened.

Before long one of the disciples came to Jesus and began to talk in an undertone. They could hear little of what was said, but heard Jesus' response, "Give ye them to eat." The disciples looked surprised and then said in a louder tone, "But, Master, we have nothing, and the little money we have would not begin to feed so many."

Amos crowded close to another of the disciples. "I have some loaves and fishes. You can have them if you wish," he said, eagerly.

Jesus called the lad to him. Then he took the loaves and fishes and blessed them and gave to the disciples and they to the multitude. Turning to the boy he said, "Son, to-day you have been a partner in helpfulness with me. Would you wish to remain a partner for life?" Amos could say nothing, but the answering look in his eye plainly said "Yes." He thereby pledged himself a partner with Jesus for life.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MARCH

MAKING THE GREAT DECISION

WORMS FOR LARK FEATHERS

PURPOSE: To show that we may take Jesus Christ as our helper in life.

SCRIPTURE: Regard with horror what is evil; cling to what is right.—*Rom. 1. 9.*

Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God. —*Matt. 5. 8.*

Holy Father, keep them by the power of thy Name which thou hast given me, that they may be one as we are one. . . . I pray not that thou wilt take them out of the world, but that thou wilt keep them from the evil one.—*John 17. 11, 12; 15, 16.*

LESSON STORY

FROM the land of France there comes to us an ancient legend concerning the lark. Of all the birds of field or forest the lark sings the most beautifully. With the first rosy flush of the dawn or during the heat of the noonday sun, he may be heard far above the clouds pouring out his heart in rapturous melody. So high he goes that his form is entirely lost to sight from the earth below, but his presence is made known by the warbling notes which come floating downward.

Upon a certain day a lark sprang from his nest among the leafy branches and started toward the blue above. He had gone but a short way when he heard a strange call from

the earth. It was the cry of a street vender calling, "Worms for lark feathers, worms for lark feathers." The lark was curious to see this unusual man who would give his worms for the feathers of a lark, but being now high in the air he continued his flight.

On the following day the lark had only begun to soar when he heard again the call, "Worms for lark feathers, worms for lark feathers." This time curiosity got the better of him and he dropped downward to the earth. As he came near, the man said, "Are you hungry? I will give you a choice worm and in return will ask only one small feather." The lark gave a twitter of amusement. One feather meant nothing to him and the worms did look tempting. So he came and sat on the edge of the vender's basket. He selected the largest worm he could find and allowed the vender to pull out a small feather from his wing. Then springing upward he mounted toward the ethereal blue.

For many days the lark heard the call of the vender. At times he would come down to earth and exchange his feather for food, at others he remained in the dizzy heights and flooded the world with melody.

Then came a day when the lark became weary. "Why should I stay up here all alone

and sing," he said, "when I might go down to earth and enjoy the food of the vender? His price is but a single feather and the worms are delicious." He sank quickly toward the earth and found the vender in the street.

"I am weary of the clouds," said the lark. "I would exchange ten of my feathers this time." Then he sat upon the basket of the vender and enjoyed his feast while the old man removed ten feathers from his wings. When he had finished, the lark sprang upward as usual when lo, he sank to the earth with a moan. His wings would not support his weight. No longer could he fly upward. No longer could he climb to the clouds and shower the world with melody. He had sold his priceless gift for worms.

Application

Boys and girls, this lesson confronts us with a most serious thought. How are we to guard that most priceless treasure which God has intrusted to us? How are we to retain the purity of soul which we had as children? We come from the hands of our Creator spotless and pure. As we grow older, we begin to meet temptations. We see and hear things that are evil, perhaps we begin to have unkind and impure thoughts. The chains of bad

habit may begin to bind us down. We may allow sin to creep into our lives. We are in danger of losing our priceless gift.

There is only one way to live life at its best and that is by taking Jesus Christ as our personal Friend and Guide He alone can help us to overcome the temptations of life. He can guard us from evil.

The day of decision will soon be here. Let each of us then make a public declaration of our purpose to take him as our Friend for life.

BORN TO BE KINGS

PURPOSE: To show that we may live kingly lives.

SCRIPTURE: The God who made the world and all things in it, he, as Lord of heaven and earth, does not dwell in shrines that are made by human hands; he is not served by human hands as if he needed anything, for it is he who gives life and breath and all things to all men. . . . Though indeed he is close to each one of us, for it is in him that we live and move and exist—as some of your own poets have said, "We too belong to his race."—*Acts 17. 24–26, 27, 28.*

LESSON STORY

MANY years ago the people of France lived under a cruel king who made their lives bitter with bondage. At length they revolted and having stormed the palace took Louis, his wife, and their young son captives. Then loading them into a crude cart, they started

with them toward the guillotine. On the way one member of the howling mob thought of a new form of punishment. Pointing to the child he cried, "Give the boy to Baucaire." The cry was taken up by others of the crowd. Baucaire was the most wicked person in France and what they were asking was that the boy should be trained in like wickedness.

The child was lifted from the wagon and given to Baucaire, who took him home. It is said, however, that whenever he was urged to do some evil deed, the lad would square his shoulders and say, "I will not, for I was born to be a king."

Application

There is a valuable lesson in this story for us. We are born to be kings and queens of the earth. We are all children of the Great All-Father, who is Lord of all. He is watching to see whether we live worthy of our privilege. Now at this time of decision he is wondering whether we will take the road of selfishness or the road of helpfulness.

The Story of Shylock

I want to tell you of one man who chose the road of selfishness. His name was Shylock, and he lived many years ago in Venice.

As a youth he was like many of you, but he refused to do kindly deeds and think kindly thoughts until his life became hardened and embittered and thoroughly selfish. His only concern was to gain wealth for himself regardless of the welfare of others.

In that city lived Antonio, another money lender, whom Shylock hated because of his kindness. At one time Antonio came to the Jew and borrowed money with the understanding that if he could not pay back at a certain time, he would give a pound of flesh to the Jew. Thus the Jew planned to be rid of his enemy. The day came and Antonio could not pay. The Jew demanded his pound of flesh.

The next scene is laid in a courtroom of Venice. The Jew arrives with his scales and a sharp knife. The judge takes his place. Antonio is there expecting to die. They ask the Jew to have mercy. He will not. They offer to pay the money, but he refuses to accept their proposition. He will have his pound of flesh. Then Portia, the lawyer, turned the tables on him. She showed that he had conspired against a citizen of Venice; that all his money is forfeited to the state, that his very life is at the mercy of the judge. 'Tis then the judge asks, "Art thou contented, Jew?"

The head of the old man sinks on his staff, and as he slowly moves from the court he answers, "I am content."

Here is the life of one who was born to be a king but who failed to take the right road at the time of decision. He lived a selfish life and came to the end miserable and broken. Who would wish to be a Shylock?

The Example of Paul

Now let us view the life of another man, the doughty little champion, Paul. He comes to the time of decision. He decides to follow Christ and the road of helpfulness. For years he labors for the welfare of others, suffering untold hardships and difficulty. But he comes to the end of his life and looks back. With a shout of triumph like the athlete in the games he cries, "I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith." That was the way he felt at the close of his life. There were no regrets for him. Being born a king, he lived kingly.

Appeal

Children, we are born to be kings. If we choose the road of selfishness, we fail. If we choose, rather, to take Jesus as our companion and live a life of helpfulness, we succeed. Let us consecrate our lives to him.

THE UNGUARDED GATE

MAKING THE GREAT DECISION

PURPOSE: That you take Jesus Christ as your personal Saviour.

SCRIPTURE: On going outside after this he noticed a taxgatherer called Levi sitting at the tax-office and said to him, "Follow me"; he rose, left everything and followed him.—*Luke 5. 27, 28.*

LESSON STORY

BOYS and girls, our friend Jesus Christ is standing here to-day asking us what we propose to do with our lives. We have but one life to live. We all want to make a success of it. There is no one of us who would definitely strike out to make a failure. Jesus is anxious that we make the best use of our opportunities. How are you going to respond to the call of Christ to your heart?

I want you to consider this matter carefully and seriously. It is for you to decide. No one can do it for you. Jesus says, "Behold I stand at the door and knock." He will never compel you to become a Christian. You must open that door to him if it is ever opened, for the latch is on the inside. Your permanent success will depend on how you answer to the appeal of Christ.

He is calling you to a life of helpfulness. Is there anyone who would refuse such a call? If you knew where you could do some deed

of kindness you would gladly go and do it. That was the sort of life that he lived while here on earth. Day after day, he spent his time in doing deeds of kindness. Like a good leader he went about with his group of followers showing them how heroes should live. He is asking that you join his company and devote your life to kindly service.

He is calling you to a life of heroism and unselfishness. The real boy and girl loves the challenge of hard things. The real thrill of life comes from overcoming the big obstacles that stand in our path. Jesus is challenging you to become giant souls by meeting and overcoming great obstacles. It may be here at home that your life will be spent. It may be that he will lead you to other fields of service. Picture again that lonely pioneer, Livingstone, in the heart of darkest Africa.[1] Day after day, month after month, year after year, this heroic man toiled and sacrificed for the dusky natives. One day they found him in prayer by his cot—praying for the welfare of Africa. He had given his life as a "living sacrifice" that they might know of Christ. His was a life of sacrifice.

Jesus is offering you the best and finest

[1] Or take some other character for the purpose of illustration, such as Lord Shaftesbury, Martin Luther or Francis Asbury.

things in life. He is never satisfied that you have less than the best. He has said of his children that the biggest things, the noblest things, the best things alone are to be their portion. When he asks us to give up anything, it is only because it is depriving us of something more worth while. Surely we want to build only the best into life.

Suppose, on the other hand, that we fail to accept the call of Christ. What may be the consequences? We are saying that we are content with the poorer things of life. Who can tell where such a course will lead us? A rich young ruler came to Jesus once and asked that he might become a disciple. Jesus loved him, for he was a youth of culture and refinement. Then he showed him the fine opportunities of service and fellowship in his company, but the young man was afraid. He turned away and we never hear of him again. Think of what he might have become if he had been willing to consecrate his entire self to Jesus. His money might have helped the poor and needy ones. His learning might have made him a leader among the band and one of the greatest influences in all world history. But he turned away and lost the greatest opportunity of his life. We cannot afford to choose less than the best.

MAKING THE GREAT DECISION

Christ is standing here hoping that you will take him as your personal friend and Saviour through life. There will be many times in life when you will need his help and guidance. Will you not say to yourself, "I gladly accept Jesus as my Saviour and friend for life"? When you have carefully and seriously made such a statement, you have made the great decision.

FOLLOWERS OF THE RISEN KING

For the child of eleven or twelve who is uniting with the church, this Easter Sunday should represent the most significant day of his life. He is at a most impressionable period. He is accepting Jesus Christ in all seriousness. The pastor must not allow this occasion to become a careless formula. He should make it so impressive that the child will never forget his obligation to the church nor the vows he has taken. The entire service should combine beauty, dignity, and impressiveness.

General Suggestions

1. Select a *central theme* for the entire service. Suppose "The Risen King" be chosen as the central idea. The whole service, songs, Psalter, Scripture, prayer, and sermon, should center around this single idea.

2. The church should have *appropriate decorations.* The occasion is worthy of the best efforts of both pastor and people. A large white cross standing on the pulpit platform becomes a beautiful focal point for the service.

3. Secure the *best music* the community affords. Appropriate music, either vocal or instrumental, adds greatly to the beauty of the service.

4. A *baptismal service* sometimes must precede the reception into membership. If others

are to assist, they should know exactly what is expected of them, so that the program may go smoothly.

5. The *reception into membership* is the culmination of months of effort. Since September this day has been looked forward to as the goal of our labor. The pastor must decide how he can make the occasion the most impressive. If the candidates sit together and come forward after their names are read, there will be less confusion.

6. The pastor will probably want to preach a *short sermon.* His message should be in harmony with the central theme. Usually brevity is desirable.

7. The *Communion Service* might well stand as the climax of the morniug. As members new and old unite in partaking of the elements there is opportunity for a reconsecration on the part of all. If others are to assist in the Communion Service, they should know in advance exactly what is expected of them so that there will be no confusion or hesitancy.

Each pastor must build his program for his needs. Let the day stand in the mind of the child as the Great Decision Day on which he publicly confessed Christ before men. Let the service be characterized by beauty, dignity, and impressiveness.

APRIL

LIVING THE CHRISTIAN LIFE

LOYAL FOLLOWERS OF CHRIST

PURPOSE: To show that we should be loyal to Christ.

SCRIPTURE: To this very hour we hunger and thirst, we are ill-clad and knocked about, we are waifs, we work hard for our living; when reviled, we bless; when persecuted, we put up with it; when defamed, we try to conciliate.—*1 Cor. 4. 11–13.*

LESSON STORY

NOT many years ago there lived in a Chinese mission school a boy by the name of Ching. This lad, along with two hundred others, was preparing himself for a life of usefulness in his home country. The chief missionary sent out a petition to the boys one day, asking them to consecrate their lives to some form of missionary work after they had graduated. He knew that this would be a great financial loss to them, for the government was paying high wages to the graduates from the schools. What was his surprise then when he found that practically all of the boys had signed the petition.

Later, seeing the boy Ching going by, he called him in and asked why he had signed the petition. The boy looked the teacher squarely in the eyes and gave his answer. "Teacher," he said, "not many years ago my

parents along with the Christians were imprisoned in the compound at the time of the Boxer uprising. For several days they were able to hold out, but finally the compound was stormed and captured. The Boxers led the captives outside the wall and said to them, 'As you walk through the gate you will find an idol. Take a pinch of incense and drop it at the feet of the idol and you may go free. Otherwise step over to the block and have your head severed from the body.' Teacher," said the boy earnestly, "my parents and all the Christians walked straight by that idol and lost their lives. They were willing to die for Christ. Should I not be willing to live for him?"

These words of a Chinese Christian lad come to us with a ringing challenge. We have made the great decision of life and have pledged our allegiance to Jesus Christ. We are going to meet temptations and may be scoffed at because of our loyalty to him. But, like the lad Ching, if others are willing to die for Christ surely we can live for him. We cannot prove traitor to our ideals.

Let us pause a moment and see the cost that some have paid because they would not prove untrue to Christ. In the days long gone by, Nero, the brutal king of Rome, set fire to the

city and accused the Christians of doing it. Then he began a horrible persecution as a penalty for their supposed crime. We see the arena filled with thousands of spectators. We hear the blare of trumpets and from an underground passage come men, women and children dressed in the skins of animals. Then another door opens and from the cages come the most ferocious beasts of the jungle. These early heroes gave their lives rather than prove traitor to Christ.

Let us view another hero of that early day. It is the doughty little champion, Paul. We will never have to go through the persecution that he bore because we have pledged our allegiance to Christ. In one chapter he tells us of what it cost him to be a true disciple. He was cast into prison. He was attacked by bandits in the mountain passes, and by robbers in the cities. The Romans beat him with rods and the Jews on several occasions almost killed him with their whips called cat-o'-nine-tails. In one city the people dragged him out of the city gates and stoned him until they thought that he was dead. Hungry and homeless and cold, he wandered throughout the country of Asia Minor doing his deeds of kindness and heroism. Why did he suffer such cruel persecution? Because he would not

prove traitor to Christ. He would have died rather than be untrue to his Master.

As beginning Christians you may have to meet opposition or temptation because of your pledge to Christ. At that moment remember what the heroes of the past have suffered rather than prove untrue. Live such a life of purity and honesty and kindliness that you can say as Paul did, "I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith." In the hour of temptation breathe a prayer to Christ that you may prove a loyal follower of his.

FRIENDSHIP WITH GOD

PURPOSE: To show that we should cultivate the habit of daily prayer.

SCRIPTURE: Pray without ceasing.—*1 Thess. 5. 17.*

The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much.—*James 5. 16.*

Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you.—*Matt. 7.7.*

LESSON STORY

LAST Sunday we studied one of the chief characteristics of a Christian, namely, that of loyalty. To-day let us think of another. If we turn to the life of our Ideal Hero, Jesus, we will see how important he considered this factor. Jesus loved to talk to God, his Father. He talked with him as naturally as we talk

to our earthly parents. Since we are the loyal followers of Christ, he wishes us to cultivate this habit of prayer.

For Christ, prayer was a daily occurrence. No matter what the circumstances, he talked matters over with God. We remember that he began his active ministry only after forty days of prayer and meditation. From that time forward, whether in joy or sorrow, in exaltation or in seeming defeat, he took all things to God in prayer.

We remember the occasion when he had fed the five thousand. For days he had been teaching and healing the sick. He was weary and worn out with the labor of it. Note what he did as a means of rest. "Immediately afterward he made the disciples go on board the boat, and cross to the opposite shore, leaving him to dismiss the people. When he had done this, he climbed the hill to pray in solitude. Night came on and he was there alone." Jesus found rest in prayer.

Before making any great decision, Jesus talked with his Father. On another occasion he wished to select some of his followers to become his disciples. This was an important choice. These men were the ones who would carry on his work after he had gone. As a preparation for this choice the Bible says that

about that time he went on one occasion into the hill country to pray, and he remained all night in prayer to God. "When it was day, he called unto him his disciples: and of them he chose twelve, whom also he named apostles." Jesus asked guidance in the times of decision.

In the moment of seeming defeat Jesus turned to God for strength and help. It was in the Garden of Gethsemane. He knew that he would soon be condemned to death. He realized that one of his own disciples was to betray him and that the others would leave him and flee. There was only one source of help and that was in prayer to his Father.

Thus we see that our Master led a life of constant prayer and communion. In times of joy, in times of weariness, in times of decision, in times of sorrow he talked matters over with God.

Jesus would have us follow his example in this respect. He wants us to become friends with our heavenly Father. We will have times of joy and sorrow, of victory and defeat, when we will want to ask God for strength and comfort and guidance. Just as we would go to our earthly parents so we can go to God.

One of the beautiful habits which we ought to cultivate is that of the morning watch. When we awake each day, we can turn to some

passage of Scripture in God's Holy Word and there read his message to us. Then we can say a simple prayer to him, thanking him for his kindness and care and asking for strength and guidance for the coming day. We can spend a moment of time considering where we failed to measure up to our ideal yesterday, and ask God to make us to become "more than conquerors" for to-day. Also during the day we can voice a prayer at any moment if we are meeting temptation or difficulty. Such a prayer will be heard and answered by our Father in heaven.

Jesus loved to pray. He loved to talk matters over with God. He wishes us to live a life of communion as he did. He wants us to develop this friendship with God. In the words of Paul may we "pray without ceasing."

SHARING WITH CHRIST

PURPOSE: To show that we should share our money with Christ.

SCRIPTURE: And he looked up, and saw the rich men casting their gifts into the treasury. And he saw also a certain poor widow casting in thither two mites. And he said, Of a truth I say unto you, that this poor widow hath cast in more than they all: for all these have of their abundance cast in unto the offerings of God: but she of her penury hath cast in all the living that she had.—*Luke 21. 1–4.*

THE UNGUARDED GATE

Lesson Story

It was a beautiful day in the city of Jerusalem. Jesus and his disciples had gone into the Temple at the hour of prayer and were now standing by the treasury, watching the crowds surge through the Temple court.

They had not stood there long when they saw a poor woman approaching the treasury. Her clothes were threadbare and had been neatly patched many times. There was a look about the face that showed she had known want and hardship. As she approached the treasury box, she carefully took out two coins worth about one eighth of a cent each. She dropped them in the treasury, stood for a moment reverently in prayer and moved on. In a few minutes a rich man pushed his way up to the treasury and carelessly threw down what with us would amount to several dollars. With a shrug of indifference he too passed on.

Jesus called the attention of his disciples to this incident and said, "In truth I tell you that this widow, so poor, has thrown in more than any of them. For from what they could well spare they have all of them contributed to the offerings, but she in her need has thrown in all that she had to live on."

Jesus here paid a beautiful tribute to the self-sacrifice of a poor woman. She did not

have much to give, only one fourth of a cent in our money, but she gave it willingly and gladly. She wanted to share her hard-earned money with God.

This high tribute of the Christ to the self-sacrifice of his followers is just as true to-day as it was in the days long gone by. We may not have much to give, perhaps only one cent or five cents, but if we share with him in the spirit of gladness and sacrifice, we will receive the same high praise. It is not alone the amount of the gift that counts, but, rather, the spirit with which we give.

The ancient Jews had a worthwhile custom of sharing with God. They set aside one cent out of every ten as belonging to him. They felt that for the blessings which they had received they should repay him with the tenth. When the time of harvest came one measure of grain out of every ten was set aside as the property of God.

Such a plan would be a good one for the young Christian to adopt. When we have earned ten cents we can gladly put one penny aside for the cause of Christ.

Think for a moment of the help that our money can do in making this world a better place to live in. Suppose that you had happened to be born a cripple in the land of Africa.

There are no doctors around to make you well. You are living a life of pain and misery. Then imagine that some children in America gave of their money and made it possible for the missionary doctors to come to your village and heal you. Would you be thankful for the sacrifice of the children in far-away America? Surely you would. Let us remember that there are thousands in the land of Africa who are in need of a doctor's care. Your money will make it possible for doctors to go to them.

Think of the little children in foreign lands who are hungry. Their little pinched faces tell of hunger which has never been satisfied. Think of little babies without the care of parents. Imagine that they were your little brothers or sisters and think how you would feel. You would appreciate the kindness of others who would help them. The third law of the Scout is that he is helpful.

Christ has called us to share our money with him. As loyal followers we will gladly give of what we have. Perhaps we may care to set aside one cent in ten for his work. Whatever we give, let us do it with the spirit of sacrifice and devotion to his cause.

In the poem of "The Vision of Sir Launfal" we remember the lines,

"Not what we give but what we share,
For the gift without the giver is bare;
Who gives himself with his alms feeds three—
Himself, his hungering neighbor, and Me."

IN THE TEMPLE OF GOD

PURPOSE: To show that we should be loyal to our church.

SCRIPTURE: Now his parents went to Jerusalem every year at the feast of the passover. And when he was twelve years old, they went up to Jerusalem after the custom of the feast. And when they had fulfilled the days, as they returned, the child Jesus tarried behind in Jerusalem; and Joseph and his mother knew not of it. . . . And when they saw him, they were amazed: and his mother said unto him, Son, why hast thou thus dealt with us? behold, thy father and I have sought thee sorrowing. And he said unto them, How is it that ye sought me? Wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business?—*Luke 2. 41–50.*

LESSON STORY

WHEN Jesus was twelve years old he was taken by his parents to the city of Jerusalem, there to celebrate the feast of the Passover. It was a happy occasion for the young lad as he made his way along the Jordan River, and up through the rocky pass toward the City of God. Long had he dreamed of the day when he should enter through the gates of the Temple and there worship in his Father's house. His wish was soon to be fulfilled.

The band of pilgrims entered the city and

wound their way along the narrow cobble-stoned streets until they reached the Temple on the heights. How beautiful it looked, all white and gold, with the smoke of incense mounting heavenward! The trumpets of the priests summoned the people to worship. The chant of the choir swelled into a mighty chorus as they sang the songs of David. Reverently the boy bowed his head as the priest offered prayer. At last he was in the City of God and in his Father's house.

The time of departure came all too soon. Mary and Joseph supposed that he was with their party and started toward home. That night they found that he was not along. They returned and sought for him everywhere. On the third day they found him in the Temple among the doctors. When Mary spoke to him his answer was: "How is it that ye sought me? Wist ye not that I must be in my Father's house?" Jesus, the boy of twelve, loved the house of God.

From this incident in the life of the boy Jesus we turn to the later years. He is a man now of thirty years. It is the Sabbath day and he is in his home town of Nazareth. The Bible says that he went into the synagogue on the Sabbath day 'as was his custom." Here we see how the habit of loyalty to the church

which was begun as a child had been continued into manhood.

There is a valuable lesson in this incident for us. As Christians we might well follow the example of our Ideal Hero and show our loyalty by regular church attendance.

Let us pause for a moment and see the loyalty and devotion of our forefathers as they labored to make our church the great body it is. Let us consider some of our church heroes. (Select those of your own denomination.) Think of the work of Bishop Asbury as he labored in the New England States in the early days. He traveled thousands of miles a year on horseback, he slept in crude log cabins when the snow sprinkled his scanty coverlet, he toiled among the mountains of the South under the blistering sun. Though frail in body he gave his life for the building up of Methodism in the early day.

Think of such men as Peter Cartwright and his labors in Illinois. These pioneer pastors went out onto the plains and built up churches or held services in homes and schoolhouses in order to bring the message of Christ to the people. They have shown their loyalty by their deeds of valor.

Then let us consider the missionaries of to-day. These people are now on the foreign

fields working for the kingdom of Christ. They left parents and friends, they gave up home and the advantages of our country, they sacrificed all hope of wealth and have gone to the out-of-the-way places of the earth to preach the gospel.

To-day while we worship, some missionary will gather a group of dusky natives in the jungles of India and speak to them about Christ. In China they are singing the songs we have sung and will repeat together the Lord's Prayer as we have repeated it. Why? Because some loyal missionary is there laboring among them. In darkest Africa your missionary and mine will stand among the mud huts of a native village and tell them the truths of God. These persons have proved their loyalty and devotion by their deeds.

In like manner may we show our loyalty. One of the ways in which we can do this will be by following the example of our Ideal Hero and being regularly in the Lord's house on the Sabbath day.

A LAMP TO OUR FEET

PURPOSE: To show that we should read our Bible each day.

SCRIPTURE: Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path.—*Psa. 119. 105.*

This book of the law shall not depart out of thy

mouth; but thou shalt meditate therein day and night, that thou mayest observe to do according to all that is written therein: for then thou shalt make thy way prosperous, and then thou shalt have good success.—*Josh. 1. 8.*

Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee.—*Psa. 119. 11.*

Lesson Story

A traveler was once going through the mountain country in the Adirondacks. Night came on and he wandered off the trail. The man was unfamiliar with the lay of the land and was about to give up in despair. Then he saw a light coming toward him. A farmer with a lantern was walking along the path. The man quickly went toward the light and together they made their way down the path in safety. The light showed the way for their feet.

The psalmist had a similar thought in mind when he said, "Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path." He wanted us to think of life as a journey along an unfamiliar path. We do not see the way ahead. We cannot know what will happen to-morrow, nor even an hour hence. We are surrounded by temptations Hardship meets us at every turn. We want to live noble lives and to avoid the pitfalls that lurk along the way.

The Bible is to become a lamp to our feet and a light to our path in guiding us along the road of noble living.

Every boy and girl loves to read about the great heroes of the past whose lives are told in this book, the Bible. We admire the courage of the young man, David, as he slays a giant and frees his land from the army of the invaders. We thrill with pleasure as we recall the loyalty of Daniel when he was told not to pray to his God and chose the lions' den rather than disloyalty. Then there was Joseph, who was sold into slavery by his brothers but showed them such kindness when later they were in need. In the New Testament we see Paul in prison and in shipwreck, we read of him being stoned and beaten with the cat-o'-nine-tails, of his hunger and perils among robbers and false brethren and his own people. God's Holy Word tells us how these heroes of the past were more than conquerors.

It also tells us about our Ideal Hero, Jesus. We see the young lad as a carpenter with Joseph in the village of Nazareth. We follow him later in his life of helpfulness and kindness. Such a life he lived Not a day passed by that was not crowded with deeds of mercy to the needy. He healed the sick, he brought sight to the blind, the deaf were made to hear

and the lame to walk. Lepers found the flesh coming back to their bleached bones, fathers and mothers had their afflicted children restored to them well again. Helpful and brave and kind, he set an example as to how we should live.

It is also in the New Testament that he teaches us his great truths. Take your New Testament and read those wonderful words in the fifth and sixth and seventh chapters of Matthew. What a summary of noble living we have there! Nowhere else in all written books can we find a more significant and complete code of rules for heroic living.

Thus we see that the Bible is to become our light to show us the path as we journey through life. It gives us the example of those great men who lived in the long ago, how they overcame their difficulties. It gives us the teachings of Jesus as he told heroes how to live. It tells us of a great future which lies before us and for which we should prepare. God's Word should become our constant guide and help in the time of trouble.

I hope you will all read this Book of books until you are thoroughly familiar with it. Have a Bible of your own. Keep it near your bed and when you awake in the morning, start the day by reading a few passages.

Have a pencil and underline the verses that you like best. Say them over until you know them by heart. The last verse of our Scripture lesson said, "Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee." Evidently, the psalmist had found these verses a source of help against temptation. Even Jesus met evil by quoting Scripture.

As Christians just starting out in the way, let us read God's Word much. Let us memorize those wonderful passages which appeal to us. Let us follow the teachings of our Master, Jesus Christ, and live as the heroes of the past lived.

MAY

LIVING THE CHRISTIAN LIFE
(Continued)

THE MAN WHO FOLLOWED AFAR OFF

PURPOSE: To show that we should always keep near to Christ.

SCRIPTURE: Then Jesus said to them, You will all be disconcerted over me to-night, for it is written, I will strike at the shepherd and the sheep of the flock will be scattered. But after my rising I will precede you to Galilee. Peter answered, Supposing they are all disconcerted over you, I will not be disconcerted. Jesus said to him, I tell you truly, you will disown me three times this very night, before the cock crows. Peter said to him, Even though I have to die with you, I will never disown you.—*Matt. 26. 31–35.*

Then all the disciples forsook him, and fled. . . . But Peter followed him afar off.—*Matt. 26. 56–58.*

LESSON STORY

THE two brothers, Andrew and Peter, stood on the shore of the Sea of Galilee and gazed out over the rolling waters. The wind had risen and the waves were flecked with foam.

"I don't believe there is much use of going out to-day," said Peter as he watched the white caps.

"No," answered Andrew, "it is too rough. We might better stay here and repair our nets. Some of them need it badly."

So the fishermen sat down on the sandy

beach and began catching up the broken threads in their nets.

They had not worked long when Peter suddenly exclaimed, "Look, isn't that the Christ whom our beloved pastor, John the Baptist, spoke of the other day?"

"It surely looks like him," answered Andrew. "I hope he comes this way. I love to hear him speak and to see the kindly look on his face as he helps the needy ones. Do you know, Peter, I would be glad to follow him all the rest of my life if he would take me as a disciple. I would like to do something for him."

The two men worked on in silence. The approaching company came closer and closer until they reached the spot where the fishermen were seated. Jesus stood silent for a moment and then said, "Come, and I will make you fishers of men." Gladly the two brothers made the great decision and followed him.

This day marked a great change in the life of Peter. He became the constant friend and companion of Jesus. Together with the other disciples they traveled back and forth throughout the country doing deeds of kindness. Foremost among them was Peter. He was a ready speaker and was the spokesman of the group. On the several occasions when Christ

spoke of their loyalty to himself and his cause Peter pledged his allegiance in no uncertain terms. Though all others should prove unfaithful, he would always be loyal.

Then came the week which was to prove their loyalty. It was the Passover week in Jerusalem. Jesus and the twelve made their way to that city and were received with shouts of joy by the multitude. On Thursday night they celebrated the Passover feast together in an upper room. Then the Christ led them forth out of the city to the Mount of Olives. Here in a garden called Gethsemane he began telling them of the suffering he must bear and the death he would die. Again Peter pledged his allegiance to Christ. "Lord," he said, "though all forsake thee, I will never forsake thee. I am willing to go with thee to prison and to death." Jesus told him of the test that was coming and that he would prove untrue. To this Peter responded, "Even though I must die with you I will never disown you."

And then came the test. The next thing Peter remembered was seeing lights flashing far down in the valley. He could hear the clanking of swords and shields and knew that a band of soldiers were approaching. They wound their way up through the olive trees

until they came to the place where Jesus and the disciples were.

Peter realized that the supreme moment had come. He knew that his Master was in danger. But fear entered his heart. He saw the soldiers surround Jesus and lead him away. All the other disciples forsook him and fled. And Peter followed afar off.

JESUS SPEAKS TO A DISHEARTENED SOLDIER

PURPOSE: To show that if at any time we should prove untrue to Christ we should reaffirm our allegiance to him.

SCRIPTURE: So when they had dined, Jesus saith to Simon Peter, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me more than these? He saith unto him, Yea, Lord; thou knowest that I love thee. . . . He said unto him, Follow me.—*John 21. 15–19.*

LESSON STORY

THERE was a most despairing look on the face of Peter as he stood outside of the home of his friend John Mark, in the city of Jerusalem. He was thinking over the events of the past weeks. What a sad failure he had made of it all! How untrue to Jesus he had been in the time of need! He again heard his words, "Though all the world forsake thee, I will never forsake thee," and then he thought

with shame of the time he had followed afar off and later had thrice denied the Christ. And now Jesus had been crucified. The cause was lost.

Peter came to a decision. He would return to Bethsaida on the Sea of Galilee and take up his old occupation as fisherman. At least he could do that successfully. When the other disciples came down from the upper room, he told them of his decision. They decided to go with him, and that night the little group struck out for their former home.

It was with a feeling of mingled joy and sadness that they approached the Sea of Galilee. Here they had played as children and worked as young men. Many happy memories clustered about the little lake. And now, with their great disappointment fresh in their minds, they were returning to take up their work with the nets and the boats again.

Their parents and friends welcomed them home. After their greeting they donned their old fisher clothes and went down to the lake to prepare for the night. The boats were overhauled, the nets patched and mended, and the little dip nets were made ready.

As the evening shadows fell they put out into the lake. It was a beautiful night. The moon laid a silver path across the sparkling

waters. The men began their work with heavy hearts. Hour after hour they worked, letting down the deep net and rowing from one place to another. But despite their best efforts they were unsuccessful. Three o'clock came and the tired fishermen had caught nothing. Then it reached four o'clock. They were ready to quit and go home.

The fishermen began rowing toward their landing, using the dip net as they went. When they were not a great way from land they saw a figure standing on the shore. In the gray dawn of the morning they could not distinguish his face, but they heard his voice asking, "Children, have you taken anything?" They answered him that they had caught nothing. Again they heard the voice, "Cast the deep-sea net on the right side of the boat and you will take a draught." When they had let down the big net they caught a multitude of fish. Then the disciples knew that it was Jesus.

When they landed they found a fire of coals and fish and bread prepared for the morning meal. "Come and have breakfast," said Jesus. After asking a Father's blessing on the food they partook together.

Peter had remained silent and in the background during this meal. He felt ashamed of

his past and did not wish to meet the eyes of the Master. But after they had finished breakfast Jesus turned squarely upon him and said, "Peter, do you love me?" Peter answered, "Yea, Lord; thou knowest that I love thee." Thrice the question was asked and thrice answered, and then Jesus said, "Follow me." And as the first faint gleams of dawn were breaking over the Galilæan hills Peter again pledged his allegiance to Christ.

Never again was he to prove untrue to his vow. He was cast into prison, he was persecuted, he suffered dangers and hardships and difficulties without number, but he stood true to his word.

CHRISTIAN OVERCOMES GIANT DESPAIR

PURPOSE: To show that we should trust God for strength in the time of difficulty.

SCRIPTURE: Let us hold the hope we avow without wavering, for we can rely upon him who gave us the promises. —*Heb. 10. 23.*

Blessed is he who endures under trial; for when he has stood the test, he will gain the crown of life which is promised to all who love him.—*James 1. 12.*

I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me.—*Phil. 4. 13.*

LESSON STORY

IN the life of many beginning Christians

there comes a time when further effort seems useless. They have aimed to do some worthy task—to improve the League, to help in the Sunday school, to overcome some temptation. Possibly, like Peter, they have not lived up to their ideal. In this moment they feel like giving up.

God wishes us to look to him for strength in such moments of discouragement. He has given us many promises of aid in his Holy Bible and wants us to put him to the test. Like Paul, we can learn to say, "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me."

Let us recall the story of Christian in *The Pilgrim's Progress* as he used the key of Promise to unlock the dungeon in the castle of Giant Despair.

Christian had set out for the Celestial City. He had not gone far when he fell into the Slough of Despond. Here he floundered for a long time, but by persistent effort he gained the firm ground on the other side.

The burden of sin grew more and more heavy as he climbed the mountain. At length he reached a cross and the burden fell away. Three Shining Ones stepped forth and saluted him with the words, "Peace be to thee."

The first one said to him, "I give thee a pure heart."

The second one stripped him of his rags and clothed him in beautiful garments.

The third one set a mark upon his forehead and gave him a little book with a seal upon it. "Keep this book with care," he said, "and read it often. Within is the key of Promise which will unlock the doors of difficulty." So the Shining Ones left him, and Christian went on his way rejoicing.

After many days of travel he passed the House Beautiful and came up with Hopeful. Together they journeyed onward. They reached a wonderful valley on the King's Highway where the flowers bloomed in abundance and fruit hung heavy from the trees. A stile led over the fence, and the view there seemed even more entrancing.

"Come, let us cross the stile and journey on the other side," said Christian. So they turned away from the main highway and started down the bypath.

At first the way was easy to follow. But before going far it became rugged and steep. The shades of night began to fall and a storm arose. In the darkness they groped their way forward.

"Oh, that we had kept to the main highway," groaned Hopeful.

"Let us turn back and try to find the King's

Highway without further delay," said Christian in alarm. So they tried to retrace their steps.

At last, weary and exhausted, they lay down and fell asleep. They were aroused the next morning by a big, surly voice shouting as them, "Wake up there, you. Get up, I tell you."

They sprang to their feet and confronted Giant Despair.

"Who are you and what do you mean by trespassing on my property?" he growled.

They told him that they were pilgrims who had lost their way and were sleeping there for the night. But the giant said they had broken his shrubbery and trespassed on his land, so he drove them to his huge castle and locked them in the dungeon. There he tortured them for three days. They received neither food nor drink. They were beaten each day with his cruel club. At last they were ready to give up in despair.

Then Christian remembered the key of Promise which the Shining Ones had given him. He sprang to his feet shouting, "How foolish I have been. I have a key here in my bosom which will unlock the doors of the Castle of Doubt. Come, let us be going."

Applying the key, they were soon liberated from their prison and resumed their journey toward the Celestial City.

LIVING THE CHRISTIAN LIFE

(Adapted from Bunyan's *The Pilgrim's Progress.*)

THE CANDLE UNDER THE BUSHEL

PURPOSE: To show that we should be an influence for good among our companions.

OBJECT MATERIALS: A candle, a match, and a small basket or pail.

SCRIPTURE: You are the light of the world. A town on the top of a hill cannot be hidden. Nor do men light a lamp to put it under a bowl; they put it on a stand and it shines for all in the house. So your light is to shine before men, that they may see the good you do and glorify your Father in heaven. . . .—*Matt. 5. 14–16.*

LESSON STORY

I HOLD in my hand a lighted candle. It is just such a candle as our pioneer forefathers used in their homes to give light. They did not have lamps nor electric lights as we do and had to depend on these for light.

Suppose we could turn back a hundred years and come to one of their rude log cabins on a dark night. We enter the door with them and wait in the darkness while they find the candle and light it. Then let us imagine that the father of the household does a strange thing. He takes a small basket and places it over the candle like this. (Cover candle with basket.) How much light would the candle give off if it were covered that way? Not

very much, I imagine. We would consider him a strange person if he did that. Rather he will place the candle in a candlestick and set it on the table so that it can give light to those in the house.

Jesus said that we, his followers, were to be lights in this world. We are to shine for him and let our influence count for the right. We are to stand squarely against wrong of all sorts and speak out when others would do evil. Rather than being ashamed to let our companions know that we are Christians, we are to become the champions of right. This may demand courage, but it is such courage and loyalty that made the heroes of old the great men that they were.

Suppose we think in common language what Christ meant when he said we were to be as lights to shine for him. Here are a group of boys who have gone on a hike to the woods. They are spending the day in tracking and fishing and playing games. In order to carry out some of their plans they need some lumber. There is a pile of old boards not far away by a farmer's shed. One of the boys who is not a Scout suggests that they go and get some of these boards. But James says, "No, a Scout is trustworthy." He is witnessing for Christ.

A group of girls are having a party. The afternoon has been a most enjoyable one with its games and frolic. The time has come for refreshments and they are being served on the lawn. While seated there they see Jane Smith pass by. One of the girls dislikes Jane very much and begins to speak unkindly and say cutting things about her. Others add to this until Mary speaks up and says quietly, "Girls, a good Scout is kind." She is speaking for Christ.

If we are to be loyal followers of Christ, we will need to stand squarely against the wrong and for the right. This will take courage, but it is the kind of courage which made the heroes of old such great men. We will be active forces against cheating and lying and unkind treatment of others. We will not only do what we would have others do to us, but we will try to influence our companions to live the Golden Rule. We will not only try to live "physically strong, mentally awake, and morally straight," but we will aim to have our companions live a similar life. Like the candle we will let our light shine until others see our holy lives and do likewise.

There is still a further way in which we can speak for Christ. We remember that when one of the disciples, Andrew, had learned of

the Christ he went and called his brother Peter and brought him to him also. Philip likewise went and got Nathanael and led him to Christ. We can tell our best friends about our hero, Jesus, and ask them to become his loyal followers. They will be more apt to accept Jesus if we but ask them. In this way we will be shining for Christ.

Our lesson to-day has shown us two kinds of followers: those who were ashamed to stand out boldly for Christ and those who let others know where they stood. Jesus wishes us to be like cities on a hill which cannot be hid. He wants us to be an active force for him in the overthrow of wrong and the upbuilding of right.

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